
TONGA TIMELINE

**APPRAISING SIXTY YEARS OF
MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH
IN ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE**

**EDITED BY
LISSA CLIGGETT AND VIRGINIA BOND**



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*Appraising Sixty Years of Multidisciplinary
Research in Zambia and Zimbabwe*

Edited by Lisa Cliggett and Virginia Bond

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The editors and authors dedicate this volume to Professor Elizabeth Colson. She is one of very few anthropologists who, for such a long time (now over sixty years), has studied and written about a single ethnic/culture group. We are privileged to dedicate this book to the scientist who, as both daughter and grandmother of the Tonga people, made such an outstanding contribution to BaTonga ethnography and longitudinal research in anthropology.

CONTENTS

Editor Acknowledgements	xi
INTRODUCTION	
Tonga Identity in Process <i>Virginia Bond, Lisa Cliggett, Bennett Siamwiza</i>	xiii
SECTION I	
Cultural Forms Through Time	1
CHAPTER I	
Looking Back and Looking Forward: Iron Age Studies in Southern Zambia and Their Contribution to the Understanding of the Tonga <i>Francis B. Musonda</i>	3
CHAPTER II	
Ethnic Identity, Agency and Development: The Case of the Zimbabwean Tonga <i>Siambabala Bernard Manyena</i>	25
CHAPTER III	
Art and the Sacred Practitioner Among the Zimbabwe Tonga: An Analysis of the Symbolic Interaction <i>Maxwell Mukova and Jeremiah Chikovore</i>	67
CHAPTER IV	
Names of Cattle and the Cattle-Naming System Among the Tonga of Zambia <i>Mildred Nkolola-Wakumelo</i>	81

CHAPTER V	
Demonizing the Migrant Labour System in the Context of Marriage: The Wealth in Folk Literature	
<i>John B. Siakavuba</i>	109
CHAPTER VI	
The Gwembe Tonga Craft World and Development Intervention	
<i>Gijsbert Witkamp</i>	121
SECTION II	
Society and Health	149
CHAPTER VII	
Marriage Customs, Patterns and Practices, and Sexual Networks Among the Tonga of Southern Province, Zambia in the Era of HIV and AIDS	
<i>Jacob R. S. Malungo</i>	151
CHAPTER VIII	
Gender, Culture, HIV and AIDS in Contemporary Southern Zambia	
<i>Anne L. Sikwibele</i>	175
SECTION III	
Livelihoods and Development	205
CHAPTER IX	
Losing the Commons – Fighting with Magic: Institutional Change, Fortress Conservation and Livelihood Strategies of the Batwa, Kafue Flats Floodplain, Zambia	
<i>Tobias Haller and Sonja Merten</i>	207

CHAPTER X

Lessons from Agricultural Extension and Marketing
Services in Southern Zambia, 1933–80

Ackson M. Kanduza

239

CHAPTER XI

Agricultural Change and the Tonga

Tafadzwa Chevo

267

CHAPTER XII

Syaacivwule Mwangu: NGOs and People Empowerment
in the Gwembe Valley

Lawrence Maumbi Michelo

281

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INTRODUCTION

Tonga Identity in Process

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Lisa Cliggett²

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Introduction

From Iron Age sites dating back at least seven hundred years, to cutting edge research on HIV medical interventions, for more than half a century Zambia's Southern Province, and the adjacent Zimbabwean Zambezi Rift, have played a central role in social science research. Our understanding of life in Southern Province and Northern Zimbabwe, specifically of all things 'Tonga', rises from this body of knowledge, rich and diverse in approach. Some of the most recognized scholars include early founders of anthropological, sociological, political, economic and ecological disciplines. Luminaries such as Elizabeth Colson, Thayer Scudder, J. Desmond Clark, Ladislav Holý and Philip Tobias stand out for establishing a profoundly rich baseline of knowledge to which many scholars, including John Milimo, Bonnie Keller, Pamela Reynolds, Chet Lancaster and others, have since added. From these studies emerges

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detailed understanding of social, aesthetic, cosmological, political, nutritional and ecological factors of Tonga populations. African scholars have increasingly carried out insightful research in Tonga-speaking regions, but due to the range of constraints faced by academic institutions in the global south and the plethora of consultancy-driven research, these scholars have fewer opportunities for disseminating their work in academic circles.

The following articles are written by such scholars – predominantly Zambians, Zimbabweans or researchers of European descent with a long presence in the region. All of these scholars presented earlier versions of their papers at an academic conference that took place in Lusaka during July 2008. The ‘Tonga Timeline’ conference, an outcome of a ninetieth birthday wish of Elizabeth Colson’s to have a seminar in Lusaka on Tonga scholarship, aimed to bring together the wide body of scholars who have worked, or continue to conduct research in the Tonga region (indeed, Professor Colson attended the conference in 2008). The articles presented here are a first step in promoting some of the knowledge base produced by African (and African-based) scholars on Tonga social life.

Situating the ‘Tonga Timeline’ in a Century of Scholarship

Social dynamics in the context of economic, political, ecological and structural change have driven social science research in Central Africa since the early colonial period. From the start, Zambia, formerly Northern Rhodesia, attracted a broad array of social researchers with goals of unravelling processes of ‘detribalization’, urbanization, rural–urban links, and continuity and change in the face of forced structural interventions. With

Max Gluckman, the second director of the Rhodes–Livingstone Institute (founded in 1937), the RLI became one of the most vibrant research centres in Africa, overseeing social research on the impact of the penetration of the market economy and the centralizing role of governments throughout British Central Africa (see Schumaker 2001 for the RLI history). In addition to the documentation of adaptation to industrialized and urban contexts, the RLI facilitated research in regions beyond the urban nexus and line of rail in an attempt to document and understand African culture in the rural context (*ibid.*).

In 1946 Elizabeth Colson was recruited by the RLI to carry out ethnographic research on the Plateau Tonga and their role in cash-crop maize farming in Zambia's Southern Province and selling to the industrialized centres of the Northern Rhodesian Copperbelt (Colson 1949, 1951). This led to her continued involvement with the region, and prolific publications. Subsequent researchers in the region have drawn, in one way or another, on Colson's work. They have included historians, sociologists, economists, agricultural scholars, linguists, political scientists, demographers, and students of religious studies as well as both social and biological anthropologists (a comprehensive 'Tonga bibliography' of close to sixty-five pages exists and is available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bibliography_of_the_Tonga_language_\(Africa\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bibliography_of_the_Tonga_language_(Africa))).

Some of the most significant research emerging from this region includes the long-term study initiated by Elizabeth Colson and Thayer Scudder in 1956. This landmark study concerned the Gwembe Tonga populations who were to be relocated when the Kariba Dam on the Zambezi River was closed (in 1958), submerging the middle Zambezi Valley – homeland to approximately fifty-seven thousand Gwembe Tonga on both sides of the river in what are now Zambia and Zimbabwe (Colson 1960, 1964, 1971; Scudder 1962, 1966, 1972;

Scudder and Colson 1971). Colson and Scudder have continued to follow the lives of those affected through the next fifty years, as they have adapted to new environments and the effects of massive political and economic change. Findings emerging from this study include a predictive model of how populations subjected to forced relocation will respond (Scudder 1972, 1975; Scudder and Colson 1971), documentation of the resilience and adaptive capacity of social systems as well as of conservative responses to socio-economic change in the context of externally induced pressures (political, development, economic) at the national and international level (Colson 1976, 1979, 1980; Colson and Scudder 1975, 1981, 1988; Scudder 1969), and the way that education engenders new political and economic elites (Scudder and Colson 1981). The Gwembe study has also become a well-known example of longitudinal ethnographic research, providing models for strategies and methods of long-term research (Cliggett 2002; Cliggett et al. 2007; Colson and Kottak 1996; Scudder and Colson 1978, 2002).

Over the years other scholars have been able to utilize the documentation of the Gwembe long-term study as they developed their own independent research. Anthropological works which engaged the Colson–Scudder research early on include: Lancaster’s foundational work on social, economic and political life of the Goba–Shona (Zambia and Zimbabwe), neighbours to the Gwembe Tonga (Lancaster 1971, 1974, 1981); the archaeological work of B. Fagan that identifies N’gombe Ilede, an Iron Age site at the confluence of the Lusitu and Zambezi Rivers, as one of the earliest trading sites in the region (Fagan 1966, 1969); and P. Tobias’s work on human growth and nutrition in the context of forced relocation (Tobias 1958a, 1958b).

More recent research that has drawn on the Colson–Scudder work includes historian B. Siamwiza’s work on the history of famine and its causation and remediation (Siamwiza 1993, 1998,

2007); S. Clark's demographic investigation of Gwembe Tonga fertility and mortality (Clark 2001; Clark et al. 1995); R. Gillett-Netting's study of current trends in growth and nutrition (which also draws on Phillip Tobias's baseline 1947–48 study of Gwembe Tonga physical status) (Gillett-Netting 1995, 2007); L. Cliggett's work on extended family support for the elderly, migration and household economy, and environmental change (Bond et al. 1996; Cliggett 2000, 2001, 2003a, 2003b, 2005; Unruh et al. 2005); D. Crooks's work on nutritional change (Crooks et al. 2008; Crooks et al. 2007); and Ute and Ulrich Luig's study of Gwembe Tonga religious life (Luig 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999).

All of these scholars have worked in Zambia, but researchers have also been active among Tonga in Zimbabwe. These include J. McGregor's work on the social history of conservation and environmental change and the role of local politics (McGregor 2002, 2003, 2005a, 2005b), and P. Reynolds's seminal research on child labour and children's livelihood strategies (Reynolds 1991).

Much research has also been carried out among Tonga speakers on the Zambian Plateau. Dale and Smith produced one of the early classic African ethnographies on the Ila (a Tonga-speaking group) (Dale and Smith 1920); L. Holý and G. Geisler worked among the Toka-Leya (Geisler 1992, 2007; Holý 1986); B. Carmody and H. Peters examined respectively the impact of missionary work by Catholic Jesuits and Seventh Day Adventists (Carmody 1991, 1999, 2004; Peters 1976); B. Keller studied gender relationships among migrants to a small town and the role of diviners in their adaptation (Keller 1978, 1979, 2007); M. Araki looked at gender and development (Araki 1993, 2001a, 2001b); and V. Bond has carried out research on household responses to chronic illness, TB and HIV co-infection and on TB–HIV stigma (Bond et al. 1996; Bond 1993, 2006; Bond et al. 2002; Bond and Dover 1997; Bond and Nyblade 2006; Chileshe and Bond 2010).

In addition to the published research on Tonga lives, Zambian and Zimbabwean academics have produced an astonishingly large amount of grey literature on the Tonga, found in the Zambian National Archives and the Special Collections of the University of Zambia (UNZA) (see the Tonga bibliography), and at the University of Zimbabwe in Harare.

Taken together this vast collection of research captures both a broad and deep vision of how people have faced different social and ecological challenges during many decades. This is a body of work which has profound implications for a more general understanding of African social systems and social change. The seminar captured this breadth and depth of knowledge, and highlighted in particular the value of scholarship produced by Zambian and Zimbabwean researchers.

Unexpected Outcomes and Central Themes

As we drafted a proposal for the conference, we identified two goals in particular for the conference: 1) to capture a synthetic understanding and knowledge of Tonga lives (i.e. answer the question: what do we know about Tonga lives?) and 2) to identify gaps in our knowledge and the most urgent issues for future research (i.e. what knowledge must we still gain?).

While the conference indeed captured the breadth and depth of existing knowledge, and also identified areas for further research, it also produced a number of unexpected outcomes. In particular, one conference participant articulated his understanding of the conference as a ‘collective restudy’ (Kanduza, personal communication) of this broadly defined ethnic group – emphasizing that this event represented a collaborative effort to re-examine and update earlier work, and contrasting this effort with ‘single authored restudies’ in which a contemporary scholar undertakes a ‘restudy’ on his

or her own. Other conference participants echoed this sentiment, frequently referring to the most recent cohort of scholars as the 'grandchildren' of Elizabeth Colson. This interpretation of the conference caught us off guard, since our intentions were more purely tied to basic knowledge, not the process or ethics of creating knowledge.

Another most important, and again unexpected, outcome of the conference was the enthusiasm, support and energy generated by both presenters and attendees. The conference was organized as a series of thematic presentations, with periods set aside for synthetic discussion, and a final session devoted to discussion assessing the foundation of knowledge and identifying areas for further research. The whole two-day event was extremely well attended (ranging from forty-three to sixty-five attendees), and during the final session of discussion, we (the organizers) were genuinely surprised by the number of people who stayed on (approximately fifty people) to participate in discussion, despite the fact that most people had work commitments and many other draws on their time. The overall atmosphere of the conference indicated that opportunities for intellectual exchange, idea sharing and discussion of common interests and research are more limited for most African and Africanist scholars based in Zambia and Zimbabwe (and likely other under resourced nations).

One other important facet of the conference was the participation of a number of Zimbabwean scholars, despite the fact that the 2008 Zimbabwean elections took place on the first day of the conference. The dates of the conference were scheduled long before the election dates were settled, making the conference a very unfortunate overlap to an important (if not transparent) historical event. Despite the volatility in Zimbabwe during those days, five Zimbabwean scholars (anthropologists, historians and development studies specialists), travelled by bus to Lusaka in order to attend the

conference. One other Zimbabwean who planned to attend decided in the end to stay in Zimbabwe in order to cast his vote. Ultimately, the conference represented far more than an assessment of knowledge. It became an event celebrating and recognizing the diversity of scholarship – and scholars – who have produced this knowledge base despite academic, economic and political frustrations, as well as signalling the great depth of understanding into the complexity and dynamics of Tonga social worlds. In the remainder of this introduction, we highlight some of the most salient themes that emerged from the conference. We organize this volume around three topical areas: Cultural Forms Through Time; Society and Health; and Livelihoods and Development. However, many cross-cutting themes intersect with articles across those content areas. In the following discussion, we outline some of the main thematic currents that this collection of articles speaks to as a whole.⁴

Themes Emerging from this Scholarship

The River as Identity

Throughout the volume, authors reference the Zambezi River as an icon in Tonga life. In Mozambique and Zimbabwe, Tonga reside along the south, and in Zambia to the north, of the Zambezi River; Witkamp calls the river ‘the artery of Gwembe Tonga society’ and Manyena writes ‘the Tonga are synonymous

4. Throughout our discussion of the themes emerging from this set of articles, we reference the authors by their last names. However, we do not include a date; it is assumed we are referencing the chapters included in this collection. Where we reference other articles and authors we include full citation in text and in the accompanying bibliography.

with the Zambezi Valley; the term *maZambezi* was commonly used by outsiders especially between the 1950s and 1980s'. Even the chapter focused on Plateau Tonga populations identifies the role of the Zambezi in both the history of Plateau settlement, and social relations across the landscapes of valley populations and surrounding plateaus (Kanduza). Indeed, the Zambezi River has dictated and shaped history, contact, communication and livelihoods, and remains intrinsic to Tonga identity. There is evidence the Tonga have occupied Zambezi River valleys for over two thousand years – from early Stone Age, adopting Iron Age patterns of settlement and trade 1500 years ago (Reynolds and Cousins 1991, cited by Manyena this volume).

Musonda traces the flow of the Zambezi River from the west – the Upper and Middle Zambezi Valleys, to the Victoria Falls, and then east through the Gwembe and lower Zambezi valley, the latter forming 'a natural highway to the Indian Ocean' (ibid.). Musonda (ibid.) plots the evidence for early Stone Age to late Iron Age societies close to or north of the Zambezi River, in varying landscapes. In 1905, the first archaeological finds of Stone Age artefacts by Fielden were in the gravels close to Victoria Falls (ibid.). It is debatable whether the Iron Age communities developed through long distance trade links or more independently, but it is evident that through the river, contact was established with Arab, Swahili and Portuguese traders.

The river has dictated both a degree of isolation and a degree of contact; it has connected Tonga to the east and to the west, and in some places connected north and south (Colson 1960, 1971). Connections to the Lozi in the west continue to be significant in modern Zambia and in the 1990s, following the eradication of the tsetse fly in Chiawa, Tonga and their cattle began to settle further east in the lower Zambezi River valley. But the gorges, rapids, seasonal rains, the creation of the Kariba Dam and national parks in the 1950s, country boundaries and

conflicts including the Zimbabwe War of Independence in the 1970s, have undermined and sometimes ruptured connections across and along the river. Both Musonda and Manyena convey how the Tonga had their southern boundaries encroached on by Ngoni, Shona and Matebele/Ndebele raids in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The river may also have meant that the Northern Gwembe Tonga developed stronger links with the Batoka plateau than with the Tonga on the south side of the river; this is certainly true following the creation of Lake Kariba (Colson 1971; Kanduza).

Livelihoods wrought by the river included fishing and riverine subsistence farming (which allowed at least two harvests a year and vegetable gardens throughout the year, as river gardens cycled through flooding and recession). The building of the Kariba Dam in the 1950s ‘flooded the Gwembe Tonga into modernity’ (Witkamp). The subsequent displacement of Tonga on the Zambian side has been meticulously documented by Colson and Scudder (Colson 1960, 1971; Scudder 1962). Manyena documents in Zimbabwe that twenty-two chiefdoms were moved for the dam, some relocated far from the river to areas where they have continued to have limited, if any access at all, to electricity, fishing and clean drinking water. Chevo also details the significance of the river’s influence on people’s relationships to all aspects of their livelihood, including relationships to land and animals. He suggests that the creation of Lake Kariba increased the density of wildlife in the area, driving a growing presence of the tsetse fly and consequently changing Zimbabwean Tonga people’s ability to keep cattle herds. The development of national parks, commercial hunting, tourism and fishing on the south side of Lake Kariba also limited Tonga’s use of the lake, thereby limiting livelihood options. Musonda berates the possibility that important archaeological sites were flooded and points out the irony that some Iron Age settlements were discovered because of

development. The Zambezi River continues to be encased in Tonga identity, the flooding and presence of the dam and the flow of the river, analogies for disruption and continuity.

Complexity and Practicality in Identity

All of the articles in this volume capture aspects of the deeply practical nature of Tonga lives, amidst social, symbolic and material complexity. The chapters that explore Tonga and neighbouring groups' social institutions (Sikwibele, Malungo, Haller and Merten, Kanduzi) describe in significant detail the highly complex kinship arrangements that underpin all aspects of livelihoods. The matrilineal lineage and clan, along with polygynous marriage systems are seen as assets that facilitate broad social networks and flexible systems of resource access, helping people meet material needs (Haller and Merten, Kanduzi). However, those same systems can foster conditions in which people may be at increased risk for HIV and particular kinds of social inequalities (Sikwibele, Malungo).

Tonga classification of cattle and crafts – the latter in the Chitonga and the former mostly in Chitonga but also in English and other Zambian languages – reflect both the complexity and the pragmatism of Tonga identity. Natural resources and assets have functions; cattle are needed to plough the land and are a practical strategy for economic security and to forge alliances, and in the past, cattle by-products were used by households (cow dung, milk, leather) for building, consumption, furniture and clothes (Wakumelo). There is no Chitonga equivalent to the English words 'crafts' and 'craftmaker'; craftsmanship is labelled according to the product, for example metalwork is *butale* meaning 'hard and strong', men and women make different crafts (using the same products) to meet their own gender needs and in the past crafts provided items for the household – storage

baskets, stools, wooden spoons, fishing baskets – and more recently, crafts can be sold for cash (Witkamp).

This ‘down to earth quality’ reflects ‘a straightforward relation[ship] between raw material, end product and functional destiny’ (Witkamp). However, the variation in Iron Age pottery between different periods and groups and both the attitude towards, and use and naming of, cattle and crafts also reveals the strength of symbolism and the importance of spirituality and aesthetics to the Tonga. Pottery was and continues to be a specialized skill and people who make pottery are considered endowed with spiritual connections (Musonda; Witkamp). Cattle are a symbol of wealth and are individually named, with names reflecting kin relations, circumstances, events, family history, religion as well as endearment, physical appearance and attractiveness, including *luyando* – ‘love’ – and *mubotu* – ‘beautiful one’ (Wakumelo). Owners will neither sell nor slaughter cattle they are particularly fond of and cattle are sometimes regarded as family. Likewise, the symbolism and aesthetics of crafts matter – there is appreciation of the particular skills of certain craftsmen and women, particular symbolic use of certain artefacts (for example, for witchcraft) and beadwork, pottery, basketry, stools and drums are also valued as aesthetically significant (Witkamp).

Witkamp also emphasizes that Western aesthetics do not necessarily match what Tonga people value, and that ‘purpose, function and domain of use’ remain paramount, although he also portrays the ability of Tonga crafts to adapt to Western standards of quality. Manyena describes how Tonga in Zimbabwe partly dealt with their negative ascribed identity through specialized dances and drumming associated with and valued as Tonga, as well as through the success of Tonga community radio, singers and personalities. The wider appreciation of these aesthetics gradually gave Zimbabwean Tonga a more positive identity.

'Stress', Livelihoods and Development

The recent history of the Tonga reflects a series of shocks and persistent, prolonged stress. Described in this volume are conflicts with and repression by dominant ethnic groups, loss of land and livelihood following the Kariba Dam development, land degradation, forced migration, labour exploitation, chronic drought, witchcraft trends, adult mortality driven by the HIV epidemic, corridor disease in cattle and economic downturn in both Zambia (since the late 1970s) and Zimbabwe (since the early 1990s).

In a sense Tonga have a stressed identity, although they also exhibit an ability to adapt and get by. This element of Tonga identity extends beyond local people's conception of self, and often plays a role in national and international understandings of 'Tonga' and Gwembe lives.

Manyena cites Doris Lessing's portrayal of the river Tonga as a 'very poor' people that 'break your heart'. This link between Tonga identity and a struggle for survival persists, as does the association of 'Tonga' with poverty. Tonga in Southern Province, Zambia and Tonga in Zimbabwe are identified with rural locations and with accompanying rural poverty. In the absence of a welfare state, people survive on the back of their own efforts – or the efforts of kin.

These notions of stress and poverty influence interventions in the region, as many of the articles in this volume attest. In these instances outsiders frequently arrive in Tonga communities to help the 'stressed' and 'desperate' people, although as Michelo suggests, most often these are the more easily accessible communities, rather than more isolated communities which are perhaps most in need of interventions. Contrary to many development agents' assumptions about the desperation of Tonga people, the highly complex and deeply practical nature of Tonga social systems mentioned above has

served the Tonga well since before the creation of the Zambian nation (Kanduza, Haller and Merten). Similarly, Iron Age excavations, cattle and crafts demonstrate how diversity of livelihoods has always been and will remain key to survival. Iron Age societies engaged in barter and trade of goods as well as agriculture (Musonda); in modern times, people farm cereal crops for consumption and sale (Kanduza); cattle are a bank of wealth that can be drawn from when times are hard (Wakumelo); crafts can be exchanged for cash (Witkamp); migration remains an option (Siakavuba); and music and drumming can generate income as well as affirm identity (Mukova and Chikovore).

Interactions between development initiatives and the Tonga emerge in all of the articles in the volume, although some articles take such interventions as a critical and central focus (the section on Livelihoods and Development), while in other articles interventions, NGOs and state-led change emerge as aspects of Tonga social worlds, whether through craft projects designed to improve livelihoods (Witkamp); linkages between archaeological finds and road building or dam construction (Musonda, Chevo, Siakavuba); literacy and identity programs (Manyena, Mukova and Chikovore); or in cattle marketing and historical events that might give names to the family herd (Wakumelo). Consequently, one facet of Tonga identity, certainly in the current context, but also historically, is the ever-present 'project' from external agents. The research captured in these articles, and also discussed during the conference, captures the energy with which Tonga engage, push back, respond, resist, manipulate and interpret development efforts in their communities and regions. As Manyena and Michelo both document, Tonga are creative and proactive in making both their development and identity needs clear.

Gender

While a few articles in this collection take gender as a central concern (Sikwibele, Malungo), gender dynamics appear in the majority of articles, including in processes such as craft production and cattle ownership. Witkamp points out clearly that men and women have different spheres of craft production, such as women's production of storage baskets and men's production of fishing baskets. In discussions of the domestic sphere, gendered (and age-based) divisions of labour are also common.

Most frequently, gender emerges as a theme in terms of economic differentiation between men and women. Kanduzi documents the control men wield over commercial maize production, pointing to imbalances in women's ability to gain a foot hold in that economic sphere. Similarly, Wakumelo explores the predominantly male world of cattle ownership, and Manyena documents men's more frequent engagement with development efforts. Even Witkamp explains how men earn higher wages than women, for less time investment, by selling more expensive crafts, such as drums.

A key theme that emerged throughout the conference, and appears most clearly in Sikwibele's and Malungo's articles, is family dynamics – particularly polygyny and gendered dimensions of family life. As mentioned above in the discussion of complexity and practicality, the Tonga are known as a polygynous ethnic group; other ethnic groups in the region may practice this marriage form, but frequently when Tonga people are referenced, discussions of polygyny arise quickly. In addition to the two articles in this volume, two conference presentations dealt directly with questions of multiple wives and related family dynamics, as they impact divisions of labour in rural livelihoods (Martin-Beck 2008) and as factors in household health/disease burdens (Chileshe

and Bond 2010). Along with the articles included here, those additional presentations offered an opening in the remainder of the conference (in fact, starting the first morning) for weaving in discussion of women's roles and agency in all aspects of social and economic life. While the majority of articles in this collection do not take up gender as an organizing feature, gender and family dynamics indeed play out in all aspects of Tonga lives and identity – from matrilineal kinship descent and gendered ritual life, to political and economic mobilization that often places men in privileged roles.

Conclusion – Scholarship, Ethnography and Identity

It is no surprise, given the long history of social research in the region, that contemporary Tonga populations have turned to previously documented aspects of Tonga culture and identity as a form of truth and evidence of what is Tonga. With the foundation of knowledge started in the 1940s, many Zambian and Zimbabwean students turned to the existing body of literature as they pursued social studies of their own nation and communities. As a result of that foundational knowledge, multiple generations of African, European, American and increasingly Asian scholars have pursued research that adds to the depth of understanding. However, as anthropological writings warn, such a recursive process (observe, document, recreate, observe, document again, etc.) often reifies social and cultural processes as stable, permanent and consistent, neglecting to consider relationships of power, and the ethnographer's own role in creating the other (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Behar and Gordon 1996; Borneman and Hammoudi 2009). Consequently, as we explore Tonga lives and identity in this volume, we must emphasize that the

articles, in fact, all point to great flexibility and change, adaptation and sometimes dissolution of social processes. They also demonstrate that Tonga populations are not, nor ever have been, isolated from the broader world. Finally, the scholarship emerging in this volume, and from the Tonga Timeline conference, points most powerfully to the profound importance of supporting the research and dissemination of work of scholars emerging from the communities we study.⁵

Underlying the timeline of the Tonga are the historical unfolding and identity transitions captured by this volume: from Stone Age to Iron Age societies; from sometimes isolated, marginalized and segmented groups to a more organized, affirmative ethnicity that frequently includes ‘pushing back’ at external labelling and interventions; from highly complex social arrangements that bolster livelihoods, to sometimes tragic risk contexts that sabotage livelihoods; from subsistence-oriented livelihoods to ambitious market-savvy farmers, herders, fishers and business men (and sometimes women); from crafts useful in daily village life to crafts as objects in global exchange. In all of these dynamics, Tonga identity swells and shifts, persists and adapts. We hope that this volume meaningfully captures the great depth of understanding about Tonga social worlds over time and across a broad region, but also captures the energy, agency and active processes of Tonga identity and lives.

5. We choose not to use the term ‘native scholarship’ in this instance so as to avoid compartmentalizing the body of work from scholars with origins in the study populations. In an effort to mainstream ‘native scholarship’ perhaps it is best not to label the work as something different than other scholarly production.

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CHAPTER I

Looking Back and Looking Forward: Iron Age Studies in Southern Zambia and Their Contribution to the Understanding of the Tonga

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Abstract

Iron Age investigations in southern Zambia can be traced to the Third Pan African Congress on Prehistory held in Livingstone in 1955. It was at that congress that the late J. Desmond Clark, the then curator of the Rhodes–Livingstone Museum (now Livingstone Museum), requested congress participants to support his recommendation for the recruitment of a curator to undertake Iron Age studies in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). Since Clark reported finding Stone Age artefacts in the late 1930s (Clark 1939), very few archaeologists had conducted archaeological investigations in the region. In the years that followed, Iron Age research was enthusiastically undertaken by several scholars, resulting in a clear picture of Iron Age societies that succeeded hunter-gatherers. This paper highlights and analyses some of the activities that led to the promotion of Iron Age research and the results of such research in southern Zambia starting about half a century ago. In summarizing the work already carried out as well as

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conjecturing on the meanings and shortcomings of extant interpretations, this paper is intended to prompt new archaeological work on this period.

Introduction

Iron Age investigations in southern Zambia can be traced to the Third Pan African Congress on Prehistory held in Livingstone in 1955. It was at that congress that the late J. Desmond Clark, the then curator of the Rhodes–Livingstone Museum (now Livingstone Museum), made a passionate request to congress participants to support his recommendation for the recruitment of a curator to undertake Iron Age studies in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). Since Clark first reported finding Stone Age artefacts in the late 1930s (Clark 1939), very few archaeologists had conducted archaeological investigations in the region. In the years that followed the congress, Iron Age research was enthusiastically undertaken by several scholars, resulting in a clear picture of Iron Age societies that succeeded hunter-gatherers. This period of intensifying interest in the Iron Age concurrently saw a set of studies following up research initiated by anthropologist Elizabeth Colson on the Tonga plateau in 1946. Colson and her colleagues initiated a long-term study of the Tonga-speaking people in the Gwembe Valley.

The Zambezi Valley, in which the Gwembe Valley is located, is a prominent feature in the Southern Zambian landscape that undoubtedly played a critical role in the prehistoric habitation of the area. The Zambezi River flows through a trough downstream to the Victoria Falls, which, bounded by steep scarps in some sections, must have been a major challenge to communication among prehistoric inhabitants on both sides of the river. The situation may not have been

entirely different in the Zambezi Valley region to the Muchinga Escarpment, where the natural corridors between the Luangwa Valley and the plateau to the west of the escarpment facilitated communication between the two areas and made communication easy (Musonda 1983: 338). It has been acknowledged that contacts with Zimbabwe were possible across some favourable parts of the Zambezi Valley (Miller 1969: 41). Similarly, the Zambezi Valley forms a natural highway to the Indian Ocean, making communication between the east and west of the country easy except where gorges and steep scarps exist. The Gwembe Valley had Tonga-speaking people living along the banks on both sides of the Zambezi River. West of the Gwembe Valley, the Middle and Upper Zambezi Valleys, the environment is characterized more by the Kalahari type of sands that cover much of the area (Musonda 1987). Because of the relative ease of movement in such environments, contact between the east and west of the Zambezi Valley and the surrounding regions were possible during prehistoric times and were probably even more favourable during the dry periods.

This chapter highlights and analyses some of the activities that led to the promotion of Iron Age research and the results of such research in southern Zambia, starting about half a century ago. The geographical focus of this paper is restricted to the region north of the Zambezi River where Elizabeth Colson has undertaken her anthropological research among the Tonga-speaking people over the last thirty-five years. Very little attempt has been made in this paper to relate archaeological discoveries north of the Zambezi River with those from South of the Zambezi, not because there is lack of evidence but as part of the paper's wider aim to stimulate and encourage others to carry the project forward. Indeed, this historiographical work is intended to challenge others interested in the archaeology of the region to move the project to a new frontier.

Early Efforts to Initiate Iron Age Research

In 1948, following the 1947 Pan-African Congress of Prehistory and Quaternary Studies held in Nairobi, Kenya, Clark submitted a working scheme to the Northern Rhodesia Government for the establishment of an archaeological survey to cover Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland (now Malawi). The two governments agreed to support the project but only if funds could be provided from the United Kingdom Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. Unfortunately, Britain's Secretary of State, who was in charge of the Colonial Treasury at the time, ruled that archaeological research did not fall within the scope of the Fund.

Despite this setback, Clark did not despair. He waited for an opportunity at the third Pan-African Congress of Prehistory and Quaternary Studies held in Livingstone in 1955, which he was hosting, to argue for the engagement of an Iron Age specialist to study Iron Age societies whose historical time depth had not been represented well by early writers. Archaeological investigations in the country, like in many parts of the African continent, chiefly emphasized Palaeolithic studies. Even during the damming of the Kariba Lake between Zambia and Zimbabwe during the late 1950s, rescue operations of heritage resources in the area to be flooded likely considered Stone Age sites as being most important for preservation (Fagan 1966).

The country's colonial period and the attainment of Zambia's independence in 1964 are closely linked to the development of archaeological studies in the territory. During the nineteenth-century period of European imperial expansion, due to prevailing white opinion at that time, early Europeans who came to Northern Rhodesia can be said to have had little or no interest in studying the African past. Africans were deemed incapable of making any technological, cultural or

political achievements. Some scholars had even argued that Africans had no historical role in the world, had no development to exhibit, were not capable of development or culture and had no exceptional manufacturing, arts or sciences (see Seligman 1930; Ki-zerbo 1981). As a result, they did not expect to find any evidence of past civilization anywhere south of the Sahara; rather they regarded indigenous cultures as a living museum of the human past. They also lacked necessary knowledge to interpret the nature of societies that existed on the African continent prior to the advent of colonialism. Africa had five identifiable 'types' of societies, both centralized and decentralized, that were characterized by either strong or weak political systems. The five types included: the hunter-gatherer societies such as the San and !Kung of Southern Africa; pastoralists whose economy depended on animal husbandry such as the Masaai and the Fulani communities; agriculturalists who depended and continue to depend on agriculture, fishing, hunting and barter systems of trade; stratified societies that consisted of agriculturalists and pastoralists, such as those in the West Sudanic states who were characterized by shared common values (such as the Bunyoro of Uganda, with their very strong economy and political setup); and state societies such as the Bemba, Lozi and the Undi Kingdom, who were ruled by kings and queens with taxation as a major economic activity. A lack of such knowledge among Europeans contributed to their reluctance to accept the fact that African societies enjoyed some form of technological and cultural history and development. What the early Europeans failed to appreciate in particular, however, was the fact that the Stone and Iron Age societies responsible for the iron and stone technologies they were encountering throughout Africa were, in fact, hunter-gatherers, agriculturalists and pastoralists.

However the colonial period ushered in the start of prehistoric studies in the country. An influx of settlers from

Europe arrived with interest in collecting and studying cultural materials of the local populations, including in Northern Rhodesia. In 1905, Fielden (1905) and others encountered the first archaeological finds in Zambia: stone artefacts in the gravels of the Zambezi River near the Victoria Falls. This focus on Stone Age materials led to the investigation of sites such as the Victoria Falls, Mumbwa Caves, Nsalu Cave and the Kalambo Falls prehistoric site. As objects of an archaeological nature began to flood museums, along with the discovery of rock paintings in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, the European notion of a lack of development among African societies slowly began to change.

Until the closing years of the 1950s, most of the fieldwork in Zambia continued to be restricted to Stone Age archaeology. Collections in the Rhodes–Livingstone Museum had very few, if any, Iron Age objects because it was widely believed that modern populations in the territory were of recent origin, that is, not residing there before 1700 (Rhodes–Livingstone Historical Files). Clark, like his contemporaries in other parts of Africa, was interested in the earlier period of the Stone Age but was also aware of the paucity of evidence relating to the Iron Age societies. Despite its proximity to the exciting investigations of Great Zimbabwe, very little, if anything, was known about the extreme southern part of Zambia. Clark therefore wanted to see commencement of Iron Age studies that would reveal information about societies that had occupied the region north of the Zambezi River following the displacement of hunter-gatherer communities.

In his 1950 publication, *The Stone Age Cultures of Northern Rhodesia*, Clark reported discoveries of Iron Age materials and their presence in various parts of the country. Little was known about the archaeological importance of these materials. It is possible that Clark's motivation to delve into Iron Age studies arose from his previous study of oral traditions, which he titled

‘Pre-Bantu inhabitants of Rhodesia and Nyasaland’ (Clark 1950: 80–85). From 1951 to 1952, he investigated a series of pottery-bearing deposits at Machili in the Kalahari sands of Western Zambia that dated to the early years of the Christian era. The pottery finds from this site were recognized as representing the earliest pottery styles ever found in the region and were labelled ‘channelled ware’ (Clark and Fagan 1965). His further discoveries at Kalambo Falls prehistoric site between 1953 and 1963 revealed pottery, iron slag, hut fragments and other artefacts belonging to societies that succeeded Stone Age inhabitants in the area, and this convinced him of the importance of carrying out Iron Age studies.

Before the mid-1950s, apart from investigations conducted by Clark, what was known of the societies preceding the Bantu-speaking peoples was based on what missionaries, hunters and a few others had written. These were sources that did not provide accurate data, time depth or information that could be corroborated. Clark was the motivating force behind the hiring of a second Pre-historian at the Rhodes–Livingstone Museum. This individual’s sole responsibility would be to carry out Iron Age research in the country. R. R. Inskeep was hired in 1957 to undertake the position, and he was later followed by several other Iron Age specialists. Clark, meanwhile, continued with his Stone Age research.

Inception of Iron Age Research in Zambia

Inskeep was to undertake Iron Age investigations in Northern Rhodesia that would contribute to a better understanding of societies that succeeded hunter-gatherers in the territory. During the next two years, his research proved invaluable and laid a firm foundation for future systematic work in the country (Inskeep 1962: 136–89).

The discovery and excavation of the Kalundu mound, about 6 km south-east of Kalomo in Southern Province, proved one of the most important archaeological investigations arising out of the burgeoning interest in Iron Age studies. The site was an accidental discovery during road construction in 1956. Pottery and animal bones were found at the site. The excavations – in the form of trial trenches – yielded a stratigraphic sequence of pottery, storage pits, daga floors and animal bones. The findings and radiocarbon dates point to a very long Iron Age cultural sequence on the Batoka Plateau with successive communities in residence there whose lifestyle may not have been too different from the Tonga (Fagan 1966, 1967). Other Iron Age sites, which remain unexplored, were reported in the Sinazongwe area and other parts of Southern Province (Inskeep 1962). Phillipson has also reported younger Iron Age sites in the Gwembe Valley close in proximity to the Ingombe Ilede site (Fagan et al. 1969: 163–84).

In 1959, Brian Fagan succeeded Inskeep as curator at the Rhodes–Livingstone Museum and took charge of Iron Age research. One of his major Iron Age investigations occurred at Ingombe Ilede, a site that was also discovered by accident following the commencement of the Kariba Hydroelectric Scheme Project in the late 1950s. Other archaeological investigations followed at sites such as Isamu Pati, Kangila and Sebanzi, revealing the rich cultural traditions of the pre-colonial inhabitants of the Batoka Plateau.

Evidence from Ingombe Ilede suggests that the economy of the people was based on cultivation of sorghum, as evidenced from the presence of carbonized seeds, iron hoes, and proof that cattle and goats were kept. Trade was important during the latter years as evident in the discovery of copper crosses, imported cloth, glass beads and iron bangles. Hunting was an important economic activity and seems to have been concentrated on elephants, hippos, crocodiles, buffalo, rhino

and various types of antelope. One interesting feature at Ingombe Ilede is the lack of traces of huts beyond some daga rubble lines, which may suggest a mode of life similar to modern Tonga who live in the valley as a strategy for coping with hot climatic conditions (Fagan 1967). This aspect is discussed below.

Following independence in 1964, there was a considerable swing of attention toward Iron Age studies. Clark left the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum in 1961 for the USA and the new government seems to have realized the benefits of archaeology in the development of their new nation. There was an urgent need to establish the national identity and cultural heritage. The advent of radiocarbon dating in the late 1950s provided the necessary impetus for Iron Age research. Researchers had quickly come to realize that the Bantu-speaking peoples in Southern Africa had been in the region much longer than the four hundred years that had long been accepted as fact.

Several scholars, including successors to Brian Fagan such as Joseph Vogel, enthusiastically undertook research in many parts of the country, with Southern Province topping the list. The focus on Southern Province was largely due to the location of key research institutions such as the Livingstone Museum and the National Heritage Conservation Commission who sponsored much of the archaeological work in the country (Derricourt 1976). Vogel investigated the area west of Gwembe Valley from east of the Victoria Falls to the Kazungula-Chobe confluence (Vogel 1971, 1973a, 1973b). The results of his work suggest that the area was extensively occupied by a fairly large Tonga-related population for a period exceeding two hundred years.

Vogel (1971, 1975), however, avoided dealing with the important questions of Tonga origins, migratory pattern, direction of travel and point of origin of the parent population due to the inadequacy of archaeological evidence. These are

important areas of research that future Zambian archaeologists need to pursue to fill the current gaps in knowledge. However, based on Vogel's archaeological surveys and excavations in the area stretching from east of the Victoria Falls to the area in the Kazungula region, west of Livingstone, a series of cultural stratigraphic units have been defined and these are referred to as the Mosi-ao-Tunya sequence, ranging in time from about the sixth century A.D. to recent times (Vogel 1971, 1975).

One of the early settlements investigated by Vogel is Kumadzulo (Vogel 1971). This settlement has been securely dated to the sixth century AD and was fairly large with settled mixed farming communities. These communities manufactured pottery (channelled ware) and practised an economy based on agriculture, pastoralism, metallurgy and a settled village life. They had a complex social-cultural structure that differed substantially from that of the hunting-gathering bands they displaced. Trade with the east coast was important by the seventh century and involved copper. Hunting and gathering was also practised.

When Joseph Vogel also departed for the USA in the mid-1970s, research interests shifted from Southern Province to the upper Zambezi Valley and other parts of the country (Kataneke 1978, 1979, 1981, 1983, 1991; Derricourt 1985; Robertson 1991). However recently some preliminary archaeological investigations have been carried out in the Gwembe Valley and Batoka Plateau, the results of which need further study. A team of researchers from the Livingstone Museum in the Sikalongo area, at the edge of the Batoka Plateau, revealed the presence of prehistoric/historic communities whose subsistence economy was based on crop production, animal husbandry, hunting and gathering (Musonda unpublished).

Some of the finds at Sikalongo include copper crosses, metal artefacts and richly decorated human burials that offer some parallel with finds from Ingombe Ilede some 160 km to the

east. There are some interesting observations in the burial pattern of the Sikalongo skeleton. The dead seem to have been buried in an east-west position, a traditional burial practice that is widespread in Zambia. According to unsubstantiated oral traditions of the area, females and males in the past were buried facing east and west respectively. The significance of this tradition largely lies in the social roles that females and males play in society (see Fagan et al. 1969: 227). However the presence of cooking and storage equipment – in the form of broken pots and pieces of clay smoking pipe – associated with the skeleton of an unconfirmed female, tend to confirm the Tonga oral tradition that suggests that females were usually buried with the material objects they used in life.

Another interesting find was the presence of hut remains on top of a hill, suggesting a semi-permanent settlement pattern that was perhaps based on flimsy architecture of wattle and daub. However, since the research results from Sikalongo were only preliminary, great care should be taken in making a direct cultural continuity from the Iron Age to the present people of the area. But reasonable inferences about the makers of pottery and other Iron Age paraphernalia found in the area hint that their descendants are probably the people found in the area today, whose lifestyle was similar to theirs.

Other archaeological investigations in the middle Zambezi Valley have been reported in the Chirundu area where John Hodges, David Phillipson and a Mrs Anderson discovered three archaeological sites in the 1960s. The Chirundu 'A' site was reported by John Hodges to contain Middle Stone Age materials, whereas Phillipson investigated Chirundu 'B' site, which has been associated with the Late Stone Age. Mrs Anderson believed the Chirundu 'C' site represented the Sangoan period, the time period preceding the Middle Stone Age, perhaps on the basis of stone artefacts found at the site. These sites have never been excavated and their significance as ancient

habitation sites has not been confirmed. Even archaeological investigations undertaken in 1997, by a team of scientists from the Livingstone Museum (tasked to survey the Chirundu area prior to the construction of the new bridge across the Zambezi River and the Chirundu Border Post between Zambia and Zimbabwe), failed to yield appreciable results.

Arising from studies undertaken in the southern and western parts of the country, we can conclude that the significance of the inception of Iron Age research is that it marked the fulfilment of Clark's desire to commence Iron Age studies in the wake of strong European opinion that the prehistory of African societies of significance never existed at all. As argued by Derricourt (1976: 35), the past of Zambia's people was construed as the subject of oral traditions and the observations of early travellers. Therefore, Clark's efforts have not only contributed to our present appreciation of Iron Age societies but to the understanding of the societies that the Tonga are believed to have descended from, as well as creating archaeological awareness of the importance of the Batoka Plateau to the Bantu studies. However what emerges from this study is absolute lack of understanding of the culture history of the areas north of the Zambezi River that were flooded by the Kariba Dam and the societies that succeeded those at Ingombe Ilede. Even the erratic surveys undertaken in the Gwembe Valley have not been able to produce any substantive data on the Tonga. Since the early 1960s, when excavations were undertaken at Ingombe Ilede as part of the Kariba Dam Rescue archaeological project, there has been no further work in the area. Therefore, there is an absolute need to search for evidence that will throw some light on the transition from the terminal Later Stone Age to the Iron Age communities of the area. It is absolutely necessary that we begin to address questions such as how did this change come about, and what was the nature of the transition?

Significance of Archaeological Investigations in Southern Zambia

The picture emerging as a result of Iron Age studies in Southern Zambia has been built up from archaeological surveys and excavations undertaken by staff at the Livingstone Museum and the National Heritage and Conservation Commission. Due to a paucity of researchers and lack of funding, Iron Age research north of the Zambezi has lagged far behind that in Zimbabwe. Had it not been for the accidental discoveries at Ingombe Ilede and Kalundu mound, very little or nothing at all would be known of the Iron Age inhabitants of this region. The absence of any spectacular monuments in the Middle Zambezi Valley and the Batoka Plateau, like those found in Zimbabwe, has contributed to low interest among current researchers in following up the few available leads.

The Gwembe Valley project was also sometimes frustrating to researchers working in the area due to Zimbabwe's independence struggle in the 1970s. While a return to the area by anthropologists was possible at the end of the war, archaeologists were more frustrated due to the presence of landmines that had been planted in the area during the war. Now that the situation has normalized, there is need to return to the area and undertake further work.

Nevertheless, understanding of the Iron Age period in Southern Zambia is much clearer in this area than anywhere else in the country. There is good evidence to suggest a clear shift from hunting and gathering patterns of subsistence to food production at a very early date compared to other parts of the country. Remains of domestic animals, cultivated crops such as sorghum and squash, clay figurines of cattle and humans (some of which were baked in fire) suggest a strong subsistence base. This was supported by ironworking and a trade network in which conus and cowrie shells and glass

beads from the Indian Ocean were exchanged for ivory and other inland products. The presence of trade items at some of these sites on the Batoka Plateau is indicative of an outside demand for resources generated by these Tonga-related communities. They had a rich cultural tradition evidenced by their pottery and settlement patterns, which consisted of large villages in fertile areas where iron working and food production were critical activities.

Until Vogel (1971, 1973b, 1975) investigated the archaeology of the Victoria Falls region, the pottery traditions of the area were unknown. His pottery analyses have revealed a detailed cultural sequence of the Early Iron Age of the area of significance to Tonga origins and their material evolution (Vogel 1980). Vogel not only attributed the origin of the Early Iron Age in the Victoria Falls to the Zimbabwean side but also established significant differences between the Early Iron Age materials of the Batoka Plateau and those of the Victoria Falls region in terms of pottery styles. He observed that these pottery styles show general similarity after the ninth century AD (Vogel 1970). Although the question of geographic origins of the Tonga still remains unexplained, Vogel (1972: 33), using data available from the Victoria Falls region, has noted some relationship with the Gokomere complex of the Zimbabwean highlands. He has suggested that Iron Age populations inhabiting the southern parts of Zambia from the first quarter of the first millennium AD were related to their southern neighbours. This hypothesis requires further examination to determine its validity and relevance. Vogel (1973: 114) has further argued that his survey results indicate that each of the phases that have been recognized in the Victoria Falls region had a different geographical distribution. For example, his Situmpa phase has been associated with the Zambezi and Machili River valleys; the Kumadzulo phase is linked with the grassy dambo plains of the plateau south of the Ngwezi divide;

the Dambwa phase is found along the southern edge of the sandscarp; and the last phase, that is, his ceramic tradition, has been associated with the Bovu dambo at Kamangoza site.

Vogel has admitted that the evidence relating to this conclusion is thin and therefore would be worth investigating further. Indeed, it would be interesting to determine how communities selected sites where they settled and what choices they had to make. This would throw light on present choices that current inhabitants of the area make in the location of village sites. Were the early village sites of the Tonga, for example, situated on well-drained areas of cleared forest along edges of dambos, as Early Iron Age sites seem to suggest? Answers to this and many other questions may provide us with an insight into the lifestyles of Tonga. Such studies would also be extended to further understanding of village layout and association of buildings, huts, etc., and the disposal of waste products. Katanekwa's (1994) recent archaeological investigations in the Upper Zambezi River Valley, between Sesheke and Senanga, have also revealed new evidence that is likely to result in new interpretations of earlier findings.

The work in the Upper Zambezi Valley by Vogel and others confirms our belief that, traditionally, human activity and settlement tend to be focused in the vicinity of permanent water sources. This association may account for the abundance of early Iron Age sites in this region that are mainly found along stream margins (Vogel 1980; Katanekwa 1978).

We now know that the archaeology of the Batoka Plateau represents one long cultural sequence of varied pottery traditions from the Early Iron Age to the Later Iron Age. Phillipson (1968, 1975) has identified distinct pottery styles belonging to the Early Iron Age that are believed to belong to a common pottery tradition. Sites belonging to this time period, that is, the early centuries to about 1000 AD on the

Batoka Plateau, are regarded as belonging to the Kalundu Group and those in the Victoria Falls area and parts of western Zambia belong to the Dambwa Group. The evidence from archaeological sites in the southern parts of the country has indeed contributed significantly to our understanding not only of the archaeology of southern Zambia but of the Zimbabwean Plateau, the Limpopo Valley in South Africa and the Southern Mozambique Coast as well, in terms of the long-distance trade. Although communities at Zambian sites such as Ingombe Ilede may not have benefited in the long-distance trade in the same way as their neighbours south of the Zambezi River and on the coast did, there is a need to examine other developments that may have taken place and that may throw some light on aspects of the Tonga culture. Chami and Pwiti (2005: 379) have expressed doubt that the long-distance trade that some scholars (Fagan et al. 1969) attribute to the development of early Iron Age societies was a factor. Whether or not we accept the theory that communities at Ingombe Ilede and the Batoka Plateau grew and developed independently of the long-distance trade, we need to look critically at the development trajectory of successive communities in the areas of agriculture, metallurgy and development of complex systems.

Conclusion

Our present understanding of Iron Age societies in Southern Zambia is a result of Clark's commitment to study these societies. Without his insistence on the need for a second archaeologist at the Rhodes–Livingstone Museum, it is unlikely that our present understanding of the Iron Age of the Batoka Plateau would have been established. Important discoveries have since been made that provided us with a firm background on the study of Tonga of Southern Province. It is from such

studies that an assessment has been made that the cultures north of the Zambezi River are related to the Iron Age cultures to the south, although much of the evidence seems to suggest that Gwembe Valley had closer cultural ties with the Batoka Plateau during the Iron Age period than perhaps with the south. This is an area that needs further investigation to determine the type of relations that existed among those societies.

What signifies the importance of Bantu studies in the Tonga land is the presence of settlements and pottery and other Iron Age-related materials as early as or earlier than the sixth century AD. There is now clear understanding that societies that practised crop cultivation, animal husbandry, settled village life, pottery manufacture and metallurgy were preceded by those that are associated with hunting and gathering dominated by stone technology.

It needs to be emphasized that presently there are gaps in knowledge on the nature of settlement patterns that characterized early Tonga communities. Even the discoveries made so far pose difficult questions, especially those relating to the extent and nature of trade exchange networks. Therefore, there is need for more systematic surveys and excavations in order to deal with questions that Vogel and others have not been able to address – for example, Tonga origins, migratory pattern and relationship of pottery traditions to areas south of the Zambezi and north of the Batoka Plateau. It would be of great interest to both historians and archaeologists if future work would address issues relating to the extent to which the material culture at archaeological sites in the southern parts of the country is a reflection of the present Tonga-speaking people.

The Gwembe Valley has continued to experience floods during periods of good rainfall, an action that would present fieldwork an opportunity to study their impact on archaeological resources, and the role that floods may have played in shaping

the prehistoric cultural environment and human paleoecology of the area.

Earlier visits to the Valley showed the existence of environmental zones which can be surveyed systematically with sample areas within each zone being intensively surveyed. Since the early 1960s, when New Archaeology came into vogue, researchers in archaeology and other scientific disciplines have placed strong emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches to solving their problems. The significance of this approach is that it allows cross-fertilization of ideas and contributes significantly to the solution of problems.

African graduates should take advantage of opportunities which exist in African universities, such as these in the SADC region for training in African Archaeology. The Universities of Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, Namibia and several in South Africa offer courses in Archaeology and African Studies that offer basic knowledge in an African environment. This is the knowledge required in the interpretation of the past. To enhance interpretations of the past material culture, future workers in the region should pay a lot of attention to the ethnographic present, ethnographic material predating the colonial period as well as the explorers' accounts and other pre-twentieth-century records and material culture to aid construction of the traditional African life.

Considering the importance of the Gwembe Valley as revealed by recent Iron Age studies (Vogel etc.), it is absolutely necessary to undertake a systematic archaeological survey of the area downstream from the Victoria Falls, and this necessitates sourcing greater resources for research than the NHCC and museums can command. Whether this will be possible within the foreseeable future in a region with its fair share of economic problems remains to be seen. It is even doubtful that there will be visiting scholars to partner local scholars and coordinate a research programme. However any

cooperative spirit to undertake research in this area would be most welcome. There are indeed promising areas in the Gwembe Valley where excavation could usefully be carried out if funds were made available, such as the recently reported sites east of Choma and in the Gwembe Valley (Musonda unpublished report).

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CHAPTER II

Ethnic Identity, Agency and Development: The Case of the Zimbabwean Tonga

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Abstract

Much ink has been spilt in constructing and (re)presenting, if not mystifying, the ethnic identity of the Zambezi Valley Tonga in Zimbabwe. Common, but rather demeaning, descriptions and labels include ‘marginalized’, ‘isolated’, ‘poor’, ‘backward’, ‘minority’, ‘primitive’, ‘dangerous’, and ‘two-toed people’. These descriptions have far-reaching implications not only on the Tonga ethnic identity but also in the development interventions that aim to address deprivation in the Zambezi Valley. Absent in the literature is the Tonga’s agency in demystifying and negotiating ‘reversals’ to these socially constructed representations, which are also manifest in development programming. The approaches adopted by the Tonga can be conceptualized as ‘episodes’ on a continuum, with two opposite extremes. One extreme takes a radical or interventionist approach while the other takes a soft, non-interventionist approach. Using secondary data as well as the author’s ‘lived experience’, this paper provides insights

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into strategies that have been adopted by the Zambezi Valley Tonga in Zimbabwe to promote their ethnic self-identity.

Introduction

Initiatives that have been promoting the identity of the Zimbabwean Tonga, or rather demystifying their received identity through their 'own' agency, provide a lens through which broader development challenges affecting the Zimbabwean Tonga could be explored. In responding to the impact and effects of the 1957 resettlement to pave way for the Kariba Dam, the Zimbabwean Tonga have not only developed wide-ranging adaptation strategies in their new habitats but have also engaged in activities to regain their entitlements, dignity and identity.

Since the construction of the Kariba Dam, much ink has been spilt in constructing and (re)presenting Tonga identities in and outside Zimbabwe. Common but rather demeaning descriptions and labels of the Zimbabwean Tonga include, 'marginalized', 'isolated', 'poor', 'backward', 'minority', 'primitive', 'dangerous', 'degraded' and 'two-toed people'. The impact of these stereotypes is far reaching. In development programming, they manifest themselves in the adoption of *mapenzi* or *buyumuyumu* ('problem') approach rather than building on the *bukkale bwesu* ('local systems').

On the positive side, however, the combination of the Tonga's received identity, minority ethnic status, unique history and lack of basic infrastructure and services has encouraged them to strive to demystify the media portrayal of them, while at the same time improve their social and economic status (Conyers and Cumanzala 2004). Tonga agency in promoting Tonga identity and, indeed, wider development issues, has manifested itself in various forms, particularly

through institutional, social, cultural and religious action arenas. For the purpose of this paper, these forms can be conceptualized as ‘episodes’ on a continuum with two complementary extremes or poles. On one extreme lie interventionist strategies, with non-interventionist strategies on the other. The interventionist strategies tend to adopt a radical approach where conflict is viewed as an inevitable, and often desirable, feature of democracy rather a problem to be avoided (Rowan 2012). On the other extreme lie non-interventionist strategies, which largely assume a ‘soft’ or non-radical approach by promoting, among others, interactions, exhibitions and cultural shows to create awareness of other cultures. In the middle of the interventionist and non-interventionist approaches, there are those that tend to encompass both approaches. Intervention strategies, through the formation of institutions such as the Binga Development Association (BIDA), the Binga Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace Project (CCJP), the Tonga Language and Cultural Association (TOLACO) and the Basilwizi Trust have been major vehicles to advocate for Tonga identity as well as development. Bringing policy makers, the bureaucracy and communities together to address issues affecting the Tonga communities in Zimbabwe has been a common feature of these community-based organisations. As a result, BIDA was infiltrated by political parties, mainly the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), and ceased to function in 1997. The CCJP’s Binga Peace project was closed down by ZANU-PF-affiliated veterans of Zimbabwe’s armed struggle for independence from Britain. Non-interventionist strategies to demystify the Tonga identity have been variously promoted, particularly through naming, religious music, *ngoma buntibe* dance and *musinsimuke* film.

Conceptualizing Identity

Identity studies have ‘grown exponentially’ (Huddy 2001: 127) and the concept of identity has become ‘ubiquitous’ (Huddy 2001: 127; Burke 2003: 1) during the last decade or so. The concept of identity continues to draw interest from a number of research and scholarship communities, particularly anthropology, sociology, archaeology, history, politics and linguistics.² Today there are many identities. Qualifiers for identity include national, ethnic, religious and cultural, for example ‘national identity’ (Fuller-Rowell et al. 2012), ‘ethnic identity’ (Kulis et al. 2012) and ‘religious identity’ (Winter 1968), and hence ‘Tonga identity’. Identity continues to take a firm hold in the study of nations, nationalism and ethnicity (Gillian 2007).

Yet the concept of identity is a contested one. Fearon (1999) lists fourteen definitions of identity. Preston (1997) claims that the notion of human identity is intellectually elusive, and is routinely bound in social-theoretical analysis. It sometimes means too much, when understood in a strong sense; too little, when understood in a weak sense; or nothing at all, because of its sheer ambiguity (Brubaker and Cooper 2000). One of the controversies clouding the definition of identity stems from confusion and crossover with other related concepts in different disciplines (Korte 2007). Anthropologists discuss identity as an artefact of culture; sociologists view it as a set of social roles; while psychologists view it as a set of norms. Fearon (1999) states that the definition of identity is a social science problem. In contrast to many areas in the natural sciences, most of the social science key concepts either derive from or enter into ordinary language. When a term has strong roots in ordinary

2. Sociologists include Antony Giddens, Richard Jenkins and Sheldon Stryker; anthropologists include Frederik Barth.

language, it is potentially very confusing to stipulate a definition without paying any explicit attention to the prior ordinary language meaning of the term. In the end social scientists grapple with refining and redefining ordinary language meanings so they can fit them into disciplinary discourses.

Despite these disciplinary differences, there are three parallels that can be drawn. First, identity has two categories: personal and social. As a personal category, according to Fearon (1999), identity could be viewed as a set of attributes, beliefs, desires or principles of action that a person thinks distinguishes her in socially relevant ways. As a social category, identity refers to a group of people designated by a label(s) that is commonly used either by the people designated, others or both. The designations may be determined by race, language, place, physical attributes, family, relationships, work and/or membership of groups with particular interests or responsibilities. Secondly, the concept of identity helps our understanding of individual and group behaviour in social environments. It helps to search for uniqueness, conformity and distinctiveness between individual selves with others within the group, as well as with other groups. Thirdly, there are tensions between the essentialist and constructionist epistemologies regarding the nature and reality of identity. According to Cerulo (1997), the early notion of group identity addressed the 'we-ness' of a group by stressing 'natural' or 'essential' ontological properties, similarities or shared attributes around which a group coalesces. These include physiological traits, psychological predispositions, regional features or the properties of structural locations. The attributes are internalized by the group, suggesting a unified, singular experience, and a single canvas against which social actors construct a sense of self. The constructionists, mainly influenced by Foucault, post-structuralism and post-modernism, reject the essentialist notion of identity. Being a social construction,

identity is relative rather than absolute; it is an interpretation of lived experiences over time, as well as a construction of human thinking, discourse and action. In other words, it is unstable, multiple, fluid, fluctuating, situationist and contextualist (Cerulo 1997; Preston 1997; Hogg et al. 1995; Huddy 2001).

The debate around the appropriate epistemological positions in identity research and scholarship, like many other social science concepts, is at the nucleus of wider social science research. One of the positions is what Patton (2002) terms 'methodological appropriateness', which aims to increase the concrete and practical methodological options available. The constructionist epistemology is more relevant to this paper as it adopts a 'lived experience' approach through narration of events or episodes of ethnic self-identity promotion of the Zimbabwe Zambezi Valley Tonga. The narration or 'storied' (Somers 1992)³ accounts in this paper are based on the

3. Somers outlines four levels of narrativity: ontological narratives define who we are. They process events into episodes. People act or do not act, in part, according to how they understand their place in any number of given narratives, no matter how fragmented, contradictory or partial they become. Public, cultural and institutional narratives are those attached to 'publics', or to a cultural formation larger than the single individual; and to inter-subjective networks or institutions, however local or grand, micro or macro. They range from the narratives of one's family to those of the work place, church, government, and 'nation'. Like all narratives, these stories have drama, plot, explanation and selective appropriation. Conceptual, analytic or sociological narrativity refers to the concepts and explanations constructed by social researchers. Meta-narratives are embedded as contemporary actors in history, as well as social scientists. For example, sociological theories and concepts are encoded with aspects of these master narratives such as Progress, Decadence, Industrialization and Enlightenment, even though they usually operate at a pre-suppositional level of social science epistemology or beyond our awareness.

literature, interviews and also on the lived experience of the author. This is consistent with Somers who views narrativity as an ontological condition of social being, social consciousness, social action, institutions, structures, even society itself. Narrativity, according to Somers, does not suggest an imposed form on social life; instead social life and human lives are themselves 'storied'. If social identities are constituted through narrativity, social action is also guided by narrativity, and social processes and interactions, both institutional and interpersonal, it can be argued, are narratively mediated.

Ethnic self-identity, which is the focus of this paper, has always been a topic of concern in both humanities and social sciences, such as anthropology, sociology, archaeology, history, politics and linguistics (Mei-chih 2003; Mann 2006). Ethnicity is transmitted to children by exposure to the family's cultural mores and by the ethnic 'language' within the family (Mann 2006). Ethnic identity manifests itself in different forms. According to Crane et al. (2004) ethnic identity is manifest in extrinsic, concrete cues, such as material culture symbols and intrinsic, abstract cues, such as tradition. Mann (2006) asserts that identity takes diverse forms which may include behavioural awareness of religious festivals, a subtle preference for homogeneous ethnic ties, a fondness for certain foods and music, and the use of linguistic expressions consistent with one's ethnic roots.

In exploring Tonga self-identity, three propositions of Lewin's theory of ethnic self-hatred (Driedger 1976) may be quite revealing. These are self-affirmation, feelings of inferiority and marginality. First, self-affirmation describes the extent to which members identify with the ethnic support provided by their in-group. It does not only mean behavioural indicators such as language use and choice of in-group friends but also a desire to be affiliated with one's group. Second, ethnic denial includes feelings of inferiority, of being restricted by or annoyed with the in-group, or a necessity to hide one's cultural

identity. The feelings of insecurity, inferiority and discomfort caused by association with the reference group may be due to the negative stereotypes of the in-group created by the majority culture. Third, marginality refers to the uncertain position of persons experiencing two cultures but identified with neither. It also includes the discrepancy between in-group members' real and ideal identifications. In this paper, marginality of the Tonga refers to their relegation to the periphery (rather than to the centre) in social, political and economic development processes in Zimbabwe.

Ethnic identity is related to language. Crystal asserts that language and culture form indivisible components of one's identity (Crystal 2000). Language is the primary symbolic medium through which cultural knowledge is communicated and instantiated, negotiated and contested, reproduced and transformed (Garrett and Baquedano-Lopez 2002). From this perspective, language is one of the prerequisites through which minority ethnic groups such as the Tonga can be empowered, as well as define their own development as change agents. Fedor asserts that language is the medium of the culture on which people's daily lives and identities are based. A threat to language choice threatens one's existence individually and collectively (Fedor 1995). Hazen argues that cultural identity is a sociolinguistic factor that involves how speakers conceive of themselves in relation to their local and larger regional communities (Hazen 2002). As language is a carrier of culture and ethnic identity, defining Tonga language in the Zimbabwean context is to define the Tonga identity.

Constructing the Zambezi River Tonga

Demystification of the received identities is one of the most recent initiatives among the Zimbabwean Tonga. Missing any

opportune moment that advances the promotion of Tonga identity amongst Zimbabwean Tonga can, to some extent, be regretted. Yet the social construction of the Tonga, like many other ethnic groups, became more pronounced during colonial times for the purpose of maintaining the status quo of the minority white regime through 'divide and rule' strategies. Many will agree that the negative representation of the Tonga, channelled through the media, continues today, more than three decades after independence. The social construction of the Tonga is mainly related to location (including boundaries with other groups), the population of the Tonga relative to other groups, socio-economic status and political influence.

The majority of Zimbabwean Tonga reside in the Zambezi Valley, in the north-western part of the country. The Zambezi Valley shares a border with Zambia, demarcated along Lake Kariba. Although the population of the Tonga is unknown, they are found in the Binga and Nyaminyami districts (Kariba or Kaliba in Tonga), the Gokwe and Hwange districts, and parts of Lupane (Lupali in Tonga). In Hwange, the Tonga speak the Dombe dialect, while in Gokwe and Nyaminyami they speak the Shangwe and Korekore dialects. Because the Tonga are synonymous with the Zambezi Valley, the term *maZambezi* was commonly used to describe them by other ethnic groups, especially between the 1950s and 1980s. Although the term means 'those from the Zambezi' the term was considered by the Tonga derogatory since it was used to describe poor, dirty and uncivilized people.

Other tribes in then Rhodesia were hostile against the Tonga, calling them names such as 'maZambezi'. In towns like Kamativi, Wankie and Bulawayo, Tongas were despised as being backward and belonging to the 'bush'.⁴

4. Interview with Andrew Muntanga, 21 August 2007

As a result some Tonga-speaking people disassociated themselves from originating from the Zambezi Valley or being Tonga.

Much of the Zambezi Valley is semi-arid, with a tropical dry savannah climate, covered mostly by mopane woodlands and poor soils for cultivation. Limited access to resources such as fishing and wildlife, coupled with the Zimbabwe's socio-economic decline, has caused the Zambezi Valley to become a chronic disaster area, with the majority of the population requiring humanitarian food aid every year.

Yet the Tonga were seldom victims of hunger (Colson 1971; Scudder 1971; Tremmel 1994; WCD 2000; Nathalie and Dayer 2006) before Kariba Dam induced forced resettlement in the 1950s. Life along the Zambezi River before resettlement was primarily based around riverbank farming, fishing and hunting. Crop cultivation was based on recession agriculture, which depended on the flood regime of the river. Due to flooding that fertilized the riverine gardens and deposited alluvial soils, the Valley Tonga could harvest twice a year – 'there was no hunger' (McGregor 2003: 98).

Twenty-two chiefdoms were forcibly moved to give way for the dam. The Simunchembu, Sinamagonde and Musambakaruma chiefdoms, for example, were relocated to areas far from the river, where there is inadequate water (WCD 2000). Five decades on from the Kariba Dam construction, the majority of the resettled population has limited, if any, access to electricity, fishing and clean drinking water. Indeed, the Tonga were the losers. Doris Lessing, on her travels in 1989, described the lives of the Tonga as follows:

It is true the river Tonga are as poor as any other people I saw in Zimbabwe. They are thin and some are stunted. Their villages are shabby. The lives of the Tonga since they were taken from their land, their shrines, and the graves of their

ancestors, have been hard, have been painful, a struggle year in, year out, and from season to season... The great dam which deprived the Tonga of their homes has not benefited them. The lake does not irrigate the land along its shoreline: Kariba is a vast lake, like a sea. I can recommend visitors to visit Kariba, for there is nothing like it anywhere in the world. But do not visit the river Tonga, for they will break your heart. (Lessing 1993: 380–81)

Before the creation of Lake Kariba, the Tonga enjoyed ‘splendid isolation’ (Tremmel 1994: 16), dating back to some 2000 years ago.⁵ After the sixteenth century, the appearance of stronger and denser Shona-speaking communities, concentrated on the Highveld, came to have an influence on Tonga society. Due to the expanding influence of the Shona confederacies, the southern border of the Tonga was successively pushed northwards (Dahl 1994). During the second half of the nineteenth century, this was even more pronounced after the Nguni invasions from the south, which reduced the action radius of the Tonga (Dahl 1994).

But the ‘splendid isolation’ also had some negative consequences. The Tonga were neglected by the colonial government; there were no schools, clinics or hospitals, even as late as 1957 (Tremmel 1994) in Tongaland. With lack of transport and a communication infrastructure with the outside world, the

5. The broken pottery that was unearthed on the Zimbabwean side of the Gwembe Valley, dating back to the fourth century (Reynolds and Cousins 1991), could suggest that Tonga inhabited the Zambezi Valley since the early Stone Age period. It is believed that about 1500 years ago ancestors of the Tonga adopted the same Iron Age culture as most of the other people of Central and Southern Africa (Dahl 1994). They made a living through a combination of hunting, fishing and agriculture. Women had an intensive knowledge about how to use roots, wild fruits and vegetables of the bush (Reynolds and Cousins 1991).

Tonga were largely accessed through the mouth of the Zambezi River at the Indian Ocean by Arabic, Swahili and Portuguese traders (Dahl 1994). The location of the Zambezi Valley meant that the Tonga were not only isolated but also politically 'marginalized' (Vupenyu 2003), which is still felt today. According to McGregor, a combination of factors had historically shaped the 'marginality' of the Tonga as peripheral in Southern Rhodesian political space, including their frontier location, the consolidation of Zimbabwe's two major ethnic blocks, the displacement from the dam and developmental neglect, among other things (McGregor 2003). The creation of Lake Kariba and the adjacent national parks and safari areas resulted in the growth of new economic activities (notably tourism and commercial fishing), which, although providing limited employment opportunities for local people, are dominated by 'outsiders' (CCJP 2000), the people who do not originate from the Zambezi Valley.

The negative descriptions of the Tonga can be traced from pre-colonial times through to present day Zimbabwe. David Livingstone, during his exploration of the Zambezi River, described the Tonga as 'more degraded than the Barotse' (Livingstone 1865: 473 cited by McGregor 2009: 46). Tonga, even today, are regarded by other Zimbabweans as 'primitive' (Lagus 1959: 75) or 'backward' (Conyers and Cumanzala 2004: 383–98). When Doris Lessing told workers at the Training Centre where she had stayed during her visit to Zimbabwe in 1989, she was told:

You don't want to go there. They are primitive people. They wear skins and sleep in the ashes of their fires. (Lessing 1993: 380)

In a *so-called* survey on cultural values and HIV and AIDS, the Child Protection Society claims the following about the Tonga people:

Belief in witchcraft is still rife among the BaTonga and there are sexual practices linked to it ... men have to be intimate with their daughters to be exorcised of witchcraft ... in some clans men sleep with their daughters after the first menstrual period. This is done to strengthen their magical powers ... Women have to smoke mbanje so that they would perform tirelessly in bed, having spent most of their daytime drunk. (Chikosi 2004)⁶

JoAnn McGregor (2003) indicates how the post-independence national media coverage of the Zambezi Valley helped to reproduce the pre-independence negative stereotypes of Tonga that had flourished in the public sphere, particularly at the time the Kariba Dam was built.

In 1981, for example, *The Herald* repeated old caricatures of the Tonga's backwardness when it blamed high levels of malnutrition in Binga not primarily on drought, war and a history of displacement, but on 'primitive farming methods'. The newspaper reproduced a 1960s colonial image of people in the Valley with only two toes, and told stories of communities so backward that they had not learnt to till the soil and so isolated that they had still not heard of the country's independence by the end of 1981. (McGregor 2003)

Although there is need for more research to establish the origins of these constructions, it appears the demeaning descriptions of the Tonga are likely to continue. It is therefore incumbent upon the Tonga to redress these stereotypes.

6. A group of young Zambezi Valley Tonga instituted legal action against the Child Protection Society (CPS) to retract this damaging so-called survey report. The *Zimbabwean Newspaper* dated 4–10 October 2007 reported that the CPS had opted for an out-of-court settlement to deal with the case.

Interventionist Strategies Towards Tonga Identity

Institutions⁷ and organisations, particularly rural district councils (RDCs)⁸ and community-based organisations such as the Binga Development Association, CCJP, Tonga Language and Cultural Organization (TOLACO) and Basilwizi Trust have variously promoted both development and Tonga ethnic identity.

Binga Rural District Council

Binga, Hwange, Nyaminyami and Gokwe RDCs were among the several local government institutions that were created a few years after Zimbabwe's independence from Britain in 1980 to promote development in their areas of jurisdiction. Each of the four districts had various ways in which Tonga identity was promoted. However Binga, with almost 96 per cent of the population being Tonga, has been the hive of activity around Tonga ethnic identity.

Binga RDC's 1981 Lusumpuko Plan was a radical plan which aimed to transform Binga so it could be at the same level

7. There is a pronounced diversity and range of thinking on the concept of 'institutions' with no single, universally accepted definition of the term. It is an elusive and contested concept, with definitions reflecting different academic and practitioner backgrounds. For the purpose of this study ethnic identity is broadly defined. It refers to traditional, state and civil entities and their underlying values, rules, norms of behaviour and traditions that promote the ethnic identity of a group of people.
8. Rural District Councils are statutory bodies created in terms of the Rural District Councils (RDC) Act 1988. RDCs have an elected board and an executive board. The elected board comprises councillors, elected by their respective ward members, while the executive board comprises council employees. Some traditional chiefs are ex-officio members of the council.

of other districts in Zimbabwe.⁹ According to McGregor (2009), the plan was comprehensive; it advocated for major developments in education, health, agriculture, transport and fishing industries around the lake, including fish canning and freezing plants, boat and net manufacture, fresh-water prawn fishing and aquaculture. Plans included establishment of a commercial waterway combining cargo with passengers on a scheduled route and opening a border post with Zambia. All these developments were not only directed towards uplifting the Tonga people but as compensation for their losses during the resettlement. But the Lusumpuko Plan would have been incomplete without the promotion of Tonga language in the education curriculum. Binga RDC set up a Tonga Language Committee (TLC) to source Zambian Tonga language books, compile Zimbabwean Tonga materials, and lobby the Ministry of Education for Tonga language teaching. Binga RDC also advocated for the reversal of 'distortions in identity' (Mumpande 2006) by suggesting the redrawing of internal administrative boundaries, which had 'divided the Tonga' and 'put them under Shona or Ndebele dominance' (McGregor 2009: 157).

Binga Development Association (BIDA)

BIDA was created in 1990 by local people to complement Binga RDC activities and 'catch up for 100 years of neglect'

9. Lusumpuko means development. The term was popularized in the early 1980s. It was not a common term before independence. The most successful plan that has been implemented in the Binga district in post-colonial Zimbabwe (the Lake Kariba Combination Master Plan, commissioned by the Government of Zimbabwe in 1999) has gathered dust and is yet to be implemented.

(McGregor 2009: 163). BIDA grew rapidly, with more than five thousand members by 1992.¹⁰ BIDA's development plan was ambitious, comprehensive and holistic; thematic programmes covered 'everything' – education, health, gender, cultural and income generation and advocacy – the list is endless. However by 1994 BIDA was politicized, became corrupt and 'died' in 1997. By 1999 ZANU-PF had taken over the BIDA offices, which became the 'War Veterans Headquarters'. Today, the BIDA office complex remains a 'white elephant' save for being used as a pub and 'brothel'.

Like at Binga RDC, Tonga language promotion was high on the BIDA agenda. The Tonga Writers Club was supported by BIDA to work closely with the Ministry of Education and the Binga RDC. The Tonga Writers' achievements were negligible following the abrupt collapse of BIDA in 1997.

The Binga Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace

Following the 'death' of BIDA, the CCJP, formed in 1995, became the new voice of the people of Binga. The CCJP began to facilitate discussion at the community level around the district, encouraging people to conceptualize their problems as human rights issues. Conyers and Cumanzala outline how the CCJP attempted to build the capacity of communities in Binga in demanding and defending their civic and development rights. A range of developmental and advocacy initiatives, from water and community development projects to advocacy campaigns were set up (Conyers and Cumanzala 2004). The impact of the CCJP is evidenced by the relatively high voter turnout and defiance of ZANU-PF violence and intimidation by consistently

10. JoAnn McGregor gives more details on BIDA and its connections to the wider national politics in her 2009 book *Crossing the Zambezi: The Politics of Landscapes on a Central African Frontier*.

supporting the MDC political party, indicating a level of political maturity which, apparently, was lacking in many rural areas of Zimbabwe. This is particularly noteworthy given the relatively low level of education and general development in Binga (Conyers and Cumanzala 2004). The CCJP's impact on Tonga Language promotion is outlined under the TOLACO section. By 2003, the CCJP was closed down by the ZANU-PF's War Veterans of Zimbabwe for being an enemy of the people. As a symbol of the Tonga people's resilience to ensure their concerns were addressed by those with political power, the Basilwizi Trust emerged immediately after the closure of the CCJP as a new voice of the Tonga people and continues to exist today.

The Tonga Language and Cultural Organization (TOLACO)

The 'struggle' for the recognition of Tonga language as a medium of instruction in the education system in the Zambezi Valley dates back from the colonial era through to the present times (Mumpande 2006). Hachipola identifies three phases with respect to the teaching of Tonga language in primary schools: before the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965, during UDI and after independence (Hachipola 1998).

Prior to UDI, Tonga was taught from Sub-A to Standard Six. During the period before the UDI, Zimbabwe and Zambia were one country under the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.¹¹ Tonga teachers and Tonga teaching materials were obtained from Zambia, since the Zimbabwean Tonga and Zambian Tonga

11. The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was established in 1953 and ended in 1963. Malawi (then Nyasaland), Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia) and Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) were one country in which both humans and materials, as well as goods and services, moved freely to and from its different parts.

were the same (Hachipola 1998). However the collapse of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1963 at the advent of Zambia and Malawi's political independence the same year, and sanctions that were imposed on Rhodesia following the UDI in 1965, made it difficult to have the free flow of both human and material resources for the teaching of Tonga. Tonga was gradually phased out and replaced by Shona and Ndebele. In Binga for example, Shona was taught at Binga Primary to cater for civil servants who were Shona in the majority, while Ndebele was taught in rural schools (Hachipola 1998). It is understood that Chief Binga in 1974 complained to the authorities and demanded the reintroduction of Tonga in schools. However, while the colonial government obliged to Chief Binga's complaint, it was more preoccupied with the war against the 'terrorists', who were fighting for Zimbabwe's independence, than with prioritizing the introduction of Tonga language in schools.

At independence, the Zimbabwean community held high hopes about the new black government. It would 'put everything right that was put wrong' by the colonial government, they thought. For groups like the Shona and Ndebele, independence meant gaining lost entitlements to land and abolishment of racial discrimination and segregation. For the Tonga, independence meant gaining lost entitlement to Zambezi waters, fishing and wildlife resources, and the reintroduction of Tonga language in the education system. To the contrary, independence was the beginning of new struggles. Did the Tonga know they were joining the struggles that were being faced by so-called ethnic minorities elsewhere?

The struggle for the reintroduction of Tonga language in the education system has, until recently, been confined to the Binga district. Yet Tonga people can also be found in the Nyaminyami, Gokwe North, Hwange and Lupane districts. Binga is synonymous with Tonga for the reason that they

constitute the majority population, with a very small number of Shona and Ndebele.

McGregor (2009) summarizes the efforts by the Tonga to have their language reintroduced to the education system from independence to the early 2000s. However it might be useful to mention a few points. The reintroduction of the Tonga language, like other minority languages, was carried out as early as 1981 to allow schools to use the local mother tongue from Grades 1–3 and to switch over to either Ndebele or Shona in Grade 4. However it was not until 1987 that a policy directive was issued on the teaching of minority languages. The directive was a response to a Parliamentary Select Committee's recommendation that was instituted in 1984 to look into the teaching of minority languages, and also from the pressure of minority language groups following the formation of the Venda, Tonga and Kalanga Association (VETOKA) in 1986. Before the formation of VETOKA the minority groups approached the authorities independently. For example, Binga RDC established the Tonga Language Committee to look into the teaching of Tonga while the Kalanga Cultural Association promoted the teaching of Kalanga. But these developments coincided with the 'dissidents' activities that resulted in the Fifth Brigade's *Gukurahundi* massacre of about twenty thousand people, mainly comprising the Ndebele ethnic group. Associations such as the Tonga Language Committee and VETOKA were viewed with suspicion by the government, no matter how genuine their demands might have been. However, after ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU's unity agreement in 1987, VETOKA revamped its activities and mainly focused on two issues. First, the 1987 Education Act was challenged as being discriminatory as it reduced minorities to 'slaves' of the so-called majority tribes. Secondly, VETOKA successfully lobbied the Ministry of Education's Curriculum Development Unit (CDU) to print education materials for minority languages.

This saw the printing of poor quality and insufficient textbooks due to lack of financial and material resources from the CDU.

There was growing frustration among emerging young Tonga people over the slowness of the reintroduction of their language in the education by the beginning of the 1990s. The Tonga Language Committee set up by Binga RDC during the 1980s and BIDA (set up by the Tonga Writers Club) during the 1990s, were unsuccessful in having Tonga introduced in the education system beyond Grade 3. In 1998, a new and ambitious organisation, the Tonga Language and Cultural Organization (TOLACO), was formed which built on the Tonga Language Committee and Tonga Writers Club, which were by then no longer functional.¹² This is contrary to Makoni et al. (2008) who claim TOLACO was formed in 1976, yet TOLACO is an epoch in the struggle for Tonga language recognition, whose foundations are rooted in the Tonga Language Committee and Tonga Writers Club.

To eradicate 'among other things, the myths spread long back about the Tonga people being uncivilized, incapable of doing what other ethnic groups can do, and that the Tonga live in trees and have two toes', and 'to correct all the myths and present a clear picture of the Tonga people to the country and the world at large' (Manyena 2000: 10) TOLACO set itself to tackle policy, and human and material resources. TOLACO advocated for the amendment of Section 62 of the 1987 Education Act as it was *ultra vires* Section 23 of the Zimbabwe Constitution from the rights vantage point. TOLACO argued that restricting the minority languages teaching to Grade 1–3 while the majority languages were taught up to university level was discriminatory. This contravened Section 23 of the

12. The author became the TOLACO Chairman from its formation in 1998 until 2002, with Dickson Mundia and Enos Kawina being secretary and treasurer respectively.

Zimbabwe Constitution, which prohibits discrimination against people on grounds of race, colour, tribe, religion or ethnic background. To redress this violation of human rights, TOLACO mobilized the support of strategic partners – the fellow minority language groups (Tonga, Kalanga, Sotho, Nambya, Shangani and Venda), traditional leaders, Members of Parliament and the National Constitutional Assembly. With logistical and technical support from the Binga CCJP and Silveira House, TOLACO facilitated the formation of the Zimbabwe Indigenous Language Peoples' Association (ZILPA)¹³ in 2000, whose members were drawn from the Tonga, Kalanga, Sotho, Nambya, Shangani and Venda minority language groups.

Today, through the efforts of ZILPA, the minority languages can be taught up to university level in Zimbabwe, including at teachers' colleges. By 2009, with support from the government, the Basilwizi Trust, Silveira House, the Zimbabwe Publishing House (ZPH) and ZILPA, TOLACO had successfully facilitated the production and supply of Grade 1–7 Tonga textbooks in the Zambezi valley, and the creation and employment of a Tonga language district coordinator by the Ministry of Education. In 2011, Tonga language was examined in Grade 7 for the first time.

At the same time we wish to compliment the markers of Tonga, which was examined for the first time at that [Grade 7] level. Other local languages will be added in due course on an annual basis.¹⁴

13. The author was vice chairman of ZILPA at its inception on 24 March 2001.

14. Statement from Mr Happy Ndanga, Director of the Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council, *The Herald* Newspaper, 29 November 2011.

With TOLACO structures having been institutionalized in Nyaminyami, Gokwe North and Hwange RDCs, in addition to Binga RDC, it is apparent that the Tonga people have not only made strides in self-definition but have also articulated their practical and strategic development needs through the language process.

Non-Interventionist or Soft Strategies and Tonga Identity

The Zimbabwe Tonga have used several non-confrontational approaches. The common 'soft' approaches have been through, although are not limited to, resurgence of Tonga names, church music, traditional dances and the media.

Tonga Names

The importance of giving names among the Tonga has been explored in detail by Elizabeth Colson (1962) and Pamela Reynolds (2007). What name to give a new baby is increasingly becoming a preoccupation for Zimbabwean Tonga parents or parents-to-be. This section narrates the changing nature of naming as a way of defining the 'new Tonga identity' or 'modern Tonganess'. Narrating the evolution of Tonga names in Zimbabwe is complex and such a narration risks oversimplifying, if not homogenizing, the Tonga notion of naming. However people's names can be an important indicator of 'identity crisis' as they tend to reflect certain historic events. Arrival of Christianity, the 1957 Kariba Dam resettlement and pre- and post-independence politics, among other events, have had a significant influence on the evolution of names among the Zimbabwean Tonga which, perhaps, reflect tensions in their identity.

In most cases, children have *zina lyachinkonde* ('ancestor's name') and *zina lyabusaali* ('modern name'). It would appear the modern name becomes the 'official name'¹⁵ rather than the ancestor's name. New babies are given *zina lyachinkonde* after their ancestors (grandparents or close kin of both of the baby's parents). Despite the Tonga being matrilineal, with the mother's lineage being stronger, in contrast the father's side has a dominant share in naming though the mother's side also has a chance later. But names from the mother's side are not always guaranteed as this depends on the number of children the family will have. In some cases, the children who are born after the first child have several names: from the father's side, the mother's side, and from the midwife. It is a given that the firstborn is named after either the grandfather (the father's father) or grandmother (the father's mother), depending on the baby's sex. For example, if Siandyu's father is Siakubunywa, Siandyu's firstborn boy will be called Siakubunywa, and actually Siandyu's wife – even before she has a child – would be called *bina Siakubunywa* (Siakubunywa's mother). She would not be called by Siandyu's mother's name unless the firstborn is a baby girl.

Although there is need for more research, there seems to be some tension between the use of traditional names ('*mazina aachinkonde*') and modern names ('*mazina abusaali*'). It can be argued that the tension in names is symptomatic of the 'identity crisis' Tongas are still experiencing. Modern names became fashionable with the arrival of Christian missionaries in the Zambezi Valley in the 1920s. Christian names such as Peter, John, Maria and Elizabeth either replaced traditional names or were introduced as first or middle names. For example, Siachisamu Munkuli changed to either Francis Munkuli or Francis Siachisamu Munkuli.

15. The name in official documents such as birth certificates, national identification cards and passports.

Similarly, the surname or totem was also affected, but from two fronts. Missionaries introduced schools and brought with them teachers either from the Zambian side or from Shona or Ndebele ethnic groups. Those from Zambia did not necessarily pose problems, as they were mostly Tonga. Those who were either from Shona or Ndebele ethnic groups had a tendency to translate surnames from Tonga to Shona or Ndebele in order 'to understand the meanings of those surnames'.¹⁶ Likewise, Ndebele or Shona-speaking clerks who issued birth and national registration certificates translated Tonga surnames into either Shona or Ndebele. In this way, Francis Siachisamu Munkuli would be Francis Siachisamu Ngwenya or simply Francis Ngwenya. It became fashionable to abandon Tonga surnames and adopt the more acceptable Shona or Ndebele surnames. In some cases, both the first Tonga name and surname were abandoned. It is common to find names like 'Tendai Sibanda', 'Sibongile Ndlovu' and 'Shupikai Shoko'.

Those with Shona or Ndebele names were seen to be more 'civilized' than those who stuck to the traditional Tonga names. The people who were mostly affected were those who visited or worked in towns and those in the margins of the Zambezi Valley, particularly those along the boundaries of non-Tonga speaking districts. Today, these 'Shonalized' or 'Ndebelezized' surnames are still common in the Zambezi Valley. However, soon after independence in the early 1980s, the spirit of Tonga still using their original surnames was boosted by Jacob Mudenda, a prominent civil servant and politician, when he changed his surname from 'Dube' to 'Mudenda'. Jacob Mudenda's change

16. This was also confirmed by McGregor (2003) who quoted the Binga RDC minutes of 22 February 1985 and 12 September 1985: 'The translation of Tonga surnames into other languages should cease because that destroyed Tonga culture'.

of name signalled the distinctiveness and pride in being Tonga.¹⁷

The 'Mudenda effect' had a positive influence on Tonga surnames. Since the mid-1980s, Tonga people, especially in Binga, started translating 'Shonalized' or 'Ndebelezized' first names into Tonga (see Figure 1). Names like Twalumba, Chiwego, Luyando, Coolwe and Bubotu became increasingly popular.

Figure 1: Translation of Names from Shona/Ndebele to Tonga

Ndebele	Shona	Tonga
Sibongile	Tendai	Twalumba
Sipho	Chipo	Chiwego
Nobuhle	Makanaka	Bubotu
Thando	Kuda	Luyando

Today, there seems to be movement away from literal translation from Shona, Ndebele or English (examples include names like Chaaba, Maakwe, Busalali, Tubambe, Musungwaazyi and Tubone). Religious books, the Bible in particular, are the most popular sources for finding modern Tonga names, in addition to translating names or words from other languages. Traditional Tonga names, particularly those beginning with Sia- (Syanema, Syakalembo, Syalitume and Siamusimbi) have lost favour among the post-Kariba resettlement generation. Thus the Zimbabwean Tonga are moving on a new trajectory in redefining their identity through a new way of naming.

17. He was the first District Administrator for the Binga district soon after independence in 1980 and later became the Matabeleland North Provincial Administrator and governor of the same province.

Tonga Catholic Church Music

Catholic Church music is an integral component of its divine services (Elaine 1948; Fellerer and Brunner 1961). According to Vatican Council II (1975), the musical tradition of the Catholic Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for the pre-eminence of musical tradition is that, as a combination of sacred music and words, it forms an integral part of the solemn liturgy. In his encyclical, *Musicae sacrae disciplina*, Pope Pius XII (1955) emphasized the cultural task of religious music, the importance of the church-music composer, and the people's active participation in the liturgical worship (Vatican Council II 1975). It is in this spirit that Catholic music depends on place, people and time while maintaining its subordination to the liturgical functions of Catholic worship.

Most parts of the Zambezi Valley are in Hwange Diocese, which was created in 1953 from the Apostolic Vicariate of Bulawayo and Salisbury (Harare). The Diocese of Hwange comprised of Binga, Gokwe, Jotsholo and Hwange before the creation of Gokwe Diocese in 1991.

In the early years of Hwange Diocese, like in many parts of Zimbabwe, Mass was conducted in Latin while the music was gradually being translated into vernacular languages. In Binga it was not until the late 1960s that Mass was said in Tonga. The Tonga Hymnbook from Zambia, literally translated from Latin, was also available in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Zambian Tonga music found its way around Rhodesia through parish priests who ordered hymnbooks and tape recorders to teach their congregations. With the imposition of sanctions by the Zambian government in 1965, it became increasingly difficult for the Zimbabwean Tonga to access religious books, including hymnbooks, from Zambia. Local people started composing songs that were neither recorded nor documented.

Introduction of Tonga songs at St Ignatius Cathedral dates back to the 1950s when Andrew Muntanga became a catechist. Tonga people predominantly attended evening Mass since the majority were domestic workers who had work commitments until late in the evening. Tonga songs were sung during evening Mass and not in the morning Mass mainly because Tonga music was resisted by the St Ignatius Parish Council. Because these parish councillors were non-Tonga, it was argued that the 'congregation' would not understand the Tonga language and, besides, the Tonga had their special evening Sunday Mass. The liturgy of the morning Mass was therefore a preserve of Nambya, Shona, Nyanja and Ndebele. Yet and quite surprisingly, apart from Nambya, Shona, Nyanja and Ndebele were not the original languages of Hwange district.

More surprisingly, resistance was similarly experienced in other parishes, particularly in Kamativi and Binga town, where the majority were Tonga. Like at St Ignatius Parish, Nyanja, Nambya, Shona and Ndebele songs took precedence over Tonga songs at Kamativi's St Theresa Parish, although Kamativi was predominantly Tonga. At All Souls Parish in Binga Town, giving Shona and Ndebele more preference over Tonga songs or having the Mass said in Shona or Ndebele was successfully resisted, the argument being that those languages enjoyed dominance in areas where they were widely spoken.

The introduction of Tonga Catholic music singing courses in 1986 has significantly contributed to the promotion of Tonga identity. With the support of a few new Tonga priests, Tonga music was 'marketed' throughout Zimbabwe. Today, Tonga songs are being sung all over Zimbabwe, including parishes in Harare, Bulawayo and Gweru. Although Tonga Catholic music, like any other Catholic music, remains subordinate to liturgical functions of the church, it has assisted in creating a positive identity for the Tonga people. Because the idea of promoting Tonga Catholic

music is driven by agency and working within existing Catholic structures, it has had a high impact in promoting Tonga cultural identity while serving a liturgical function.

Ngoma Buntibe/Budima Dance and Identity Promotion

Ngoma buntibe remains the most precious and unique dance of the Tonga. It is an integral part of the Tonga institution. It is played during *dilwe* (funerals) to accompany the dead, *mapwayila* (memorial celebrations), independence celebrations, and to welcome dignitaries, particularly top government officials. Because *ngoma buntibe* brings people together, it can be a useful tool for mobilizing people. *Ngoma buntibe* was the main ingredient that Andrew Muntanga,¹⁸ the first Tonga Hero to be buried at the Heroes Acre in Harare, used to mobilize and raise political awareness among the Tonga in Bulawayo in the 1970s.

When [Joshua] Nkomo was released in 1974, the burial societies were now fully functional. The Tongas were now very organized. We used to raise money through *ngoma* [Buntibe] gate takings at Stanley Square. When [Joshua] Nkomo was released we organized *ngoma* [Buntibe] and played at [Joshua] Nkomo's house at No. 6. [Joshua] Nkomo was very happy with that.¹⁹

Simoonga, the largest *ngoma* group (*tanga lyangoma*) under Chief Siachilaba, has been instrumental in promoting Tonga identity in contemporary Zimbabwe. Siavwapa, the biggest drum (*nyina*), together with small drums, and *chitebe*, the *nyele* container, were among the precious items that were transported to present-day

18. *The Herald* Newspaper, 21 July 2011.

19. Interview with Andrew Muntanga, 21 August 2007.

Siachilaba during the 1957 resettlement. The *dii-dii* sound of Siavwapa continued to rumble like dynamite in an underground mine in the resettlement area. The songs, the dance and the organized *nyele* orchestra brought people together in accompanying the deceased, celebrating good harvests or condemning bad practice such as witchcraft or murder.

‘Tulamana kufwa tobe chilombe, balasyaala banakazi’ (‘We Will Perish We Men, Women Will Survive’) became a hit Simoonga song following independence in 1980. The song referenced the torture and killings perpetrated by the Smith regime’s Rhodesia Front during the liberation war, especially during the period 1978–79. These acts were carried out at Siachilaba base camp, known as *Kalundu ka Benny* (‘Benny’s Hill’). The situation worsened in 1978 with the appointment of a new Kalundu camp commander, whom the local people nicknamed *Siachivundu* (because he rarely smiled). *Siachivundu*, assisted by the auxiliary army (*manchoombe*), unleashed terror on the men. Any men he met, whether at the shops or walking along the road, were arrested and sent to Kalundu for torture. However women were not normally targeted. Hence the song ‘Tulamana kufwa tobe chilombe, balasyaala banakazi’ became a hit following independence in 1980.

Simoonga performed at national events such as the Agricultural Show in Hwange. Particularly interesting was the drama that accompanied the dance. Dancers imitated *Siachivundu* and his *manchoombe*. They wore the army regalia and carried fake army equipment. But Peter Syoonka attracted more attention. He mimicked *Siachivundu*: he painted himself white using *mopane* ashes, dressed the part, carried a fake gun and spoke *chilapalapa*.²⁰ At the climax of the dance, he would

20. Chilapalapa is a language spoken primarily in Zambia and Zimbabwe. Some describe it as a pidgin language, blending elements of Ndebele, Shona and English.

appear from nowhere and dramatically stop the dance, yelling: *Yini wena yenza lapha, wena magandanga? Wena botshiwe, mina bhulala zonke* ('What are you doing, you terrorists? You are all arrested, I'm gonna kill all of you'). Syoonka would then start kicking people around, assisted by his *manchoombe*. In the midst of the mayhem, the dance would start again with even greater energy, reaching the climax of the *ngoma* dance.

The popularity of Simoonga grew. Andrew Muntanga, regarded by many as the 'Father of Zambezi Valley politics', was behind organizing Simoonga tours and his efforts did not go to waste. Simoonga became one of the cultural ambassadors of the Zambezi Valley Tonga, in particular bringing Tonga culture to national attention. The most striking performances were those held at Heroes' Acre during the funerals of the late First Lady, Amai Sally Mugabe, in 1995, and the legendary politician, Dr Joshua Nkomo ('Father of Zimbabwe'), in 1999. Andrew Muntanga, Francis Munkombwe, and Paul Siachimbo performed the Tonga war dance (*kuzemba*), which caught the attention of electronic and print media. Simoonga has also had several tours, including two to Austria in 1997 and May 2009, as well as recent performances at a Lwiindi ceremony at Sinazongwe in Zambia. Simoonga music has been recorded and is now available at shops and on the internet.

The Zimbabwean Media and Tonga Identity

The media is one of the most powerful tools for projecting group identity. It is a powerful tool not only for disseminating norms, values and attitudes but also has implications for how we view our own identity as well as other groups' identities. By portraying a world in which people's opinions are based on their ethnic or demographic group membership, the media may also subtly but powerfully create the very opinions and

identities they seek to reflect (Anastasio et al. 1999). According to Barnett and Lee (2002), as cited by Clement et al. (2005), mediated communication is becoming the most important form of communication between cultures.

The print media in Zimbabwe is dominated by two government-controlled dailies: *The Herald* (Harare) and *The Chronicle* (Bulawayo). Other weekly newspapers include *The Sunday Mail*, *The Sunday News*, *Financial Gazette*, *The Zimbabwe Independent*, *The Standard* and *The Zimbabwean*. Apart from *Kwayedza* and *Umthunywa* (which are published in Shona and Ndebele respectively), the rest are published in English, accessible in towns and also online. The so-called minority languages have no place in the print media in Zimbabwe (Hachipola 1998). *Indonsakusa*, one of the rural newspapers, is the only paper in which a small fraction of Tonga articles appear. The majority of rural populations, particularly the Zambezi Valley community, have limited or no access at all to most of these papers due to limited or no internet access, limited distribution, language, and ever-rising costs (Moyo 1991).

The electronic media is controlled by the state's Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). ZBC has four radio channels: Spot FM, Radio Zimbabwe, 3FM and National FM²¹ and two television channels (Moyo 1991).²² It was not until the mid-1980s,

21. Spot FM, Radio Zimbabwe, 3FM and National FM were formerly Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4.

22. The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zimbabwe_Broadcasting_Corporation) says, 'Television was introduced into Southern Rhodesia in 1960. Until independence in 1980, television reception was confined mainly to the large cities, and most viewers were from the white minority. Colour television was introduced in 1984, with a second channel, available only in Harare, being introduced in 1986. This channel was discontinued in 1997 and replaced by the first independent channel in Zimbabwe known as Joy TV, which was also discontinued in 2002.'

however, that the Tonga language and other minority languages were allocated a 120-minute slot on Radio 2 every week (Hachipola 1998). The programme was aired at 9 p.m. every Wednesday and was limited to music, greetings (*kujuzanyanya*), competitions on general knowledge, and programmes on health. Music varied from traditional folklore, *ngoma buntibe* and modern music using electronic instruments.

Folklore music included 'Mpongo yabama yeetela' and 'Nelituba mbaanyoko', sung by Alfred Mujimba and Malvin Messman Siavili's Lukumba Jazz Band and 'Vaiet' by Robson Mudenda's Lusumpuko Jazz Band. But Christopher Shoko's (Kwejani Band) 'Tobalombe twayeeya kulindiswe' ('We Gentlemen Have Thought of our Home') was more nuanced about Tonga identity. The lyrics included:

*Tobalombe twayeeya kulindiswe, Tobalombe twayeeya kumaanzi
... Kulindiswe kumaanzi atontola, Kumpongo ziyota mulilo, Madada
azyana chikkokkochi...*

(We gentlemen have thought of home, we gentlemen have thought of our water... At our home where there is cool water, where goats warm themselves around the fire, while the ducks will be performing chikkokkochi dance...)

However listeners complained about the radio programme times. They argued that airing radio programme at 9 p.m. was too late as some people were already asleep. Alternatively, those with access to radios tuned to Radio Zambia to listen to programmes such as *Malikopo* and *Bulimi*. Today, Tonga is broadcast on National FM (formerly Radio 4) with an allocation of two hours fifteen minutes every week, alongside Shona, Ndebele and other minority languages (Venda, Shangaan, Kalanga and Nambya) (Hachipola 1998). There is also a ten-minute news bulletin for each language.

Unfortunately, the people in the Zambezi Valley have limited access to the Tonga radio programmes due to poor transmission.

Similarly, the audio-visual electronic media in Zimbabwe is also dominated by the three 'official' languages: English, Shona and Ndebele. Tonga people have been virtually excluded from Zimbabwe Television Services and 'there does not seem to be a move towards changing this situation' (Hachipola 1998: 73). The reasons advanced for this exclusion centre around costs and national-identity building in favour of Shona and Ndebele.

However the Tonga people have not been passive in creating alternative media to communicate their identity to the out-groups in Zimbabwe. Cultural activities have been used to project the image of the Tonga, such as the *ngoma buntibe* dance. Most particularly, the *Musinsimuke* ('Wake Up') film, although produced to increase HIV and AIDS awareness, has served to project the identity of the Tonga people. Ntengwe for Community Development, which produced the film, is a non-profit, community-based organization that supports the needs of women and children infected and affected by HIV and AIDS. Based in Binga, the Ntengwe for Community Development promotes HIV prevention, as well as the reduction of the impact of HIV and AIDS among individuals, families and communities, through a variety of media such as films, videos and publications. *Musinsimuke* is the first HIV and AIDS film produced entirely in Tonga, with its main audience being rural Tonga-speaking youth in the Zambezi Valley (UNIFEM 2004). The film, summarized below, has also been translated into English:

Musinsimuke is a sixty-minute film that depicts a sixteen-year-old girl, Luzibo, who moves from the rural areas to the Binga Growth Point to complete her education. She stays with her aunt Julia and cousin Buumi in Binga Back Harbour

(destroyed by Operation Murambatsvina in 2005). Faced with financial problems, Luzibo is lured into night life. Frequenting beer-drinking places, such the local bottle store, and practising commercial sex becomes part of her new life. She is advised by a local woman to use condoms but ignores the warning. When she meets Manjolo Mwinde, a young artist who hawks his craft up and down the Kamativi-Binga road, she falls in love with him. Shortly thereafter, the reality of HIV and AIDS hits her when she learns that Laimon, a fisherman with whom she had a casual fish-for-sex relationship, is dying in hospital. Her world is turned upside down. Pregnant by Manjolo, she miscarries, then realizes she is not completely healthy. She goes for an HIV test and the results are positive. Determined to straighten out her life, she decides to tell Manjolo everything about her HIV status. Unable to deal with the news that Luzibo is HIV-positive and knowing there is a high probability he is also HIV-positive, Manjolo gets drunk and flees to his rural home. Depressed by the news, he decides to kill himself. But just as he is about to commit suicide, Luzibo arrives and comes to his rescue. Through the positive support of friends, the couple become HIV/AIDS peer educators and campaigners. (Media for Development Trust 2008)

The Zimbabwe Tonga have also used modern technology to promote Tonga identity including Facebook, for example 'Binga Lwiiyo'. However the Mulonga Net, also known as the Tonga Online Project, has been an outstanding example of how the Tonga are using modern information and communication technology. Since its launch in 2001, the Mulonga Net has been promoting the Tonga voice over the internet in Zimbabwe and across the Zambezi River in Zambia. A number of school-based computer centres were established in both Zimbabwe and Zambia, which cater for the larger

community. According to the Mulonga Net,²³ information and communication technology is likened to ‘the constant flow of the Zambezi’ which ‘is a symbol of continuity’ representing ‘the needs of the Tonga people both to communicate amongst themselves and with others, and to preserve and develop their rich cultural heritage’. Mulonga Net has been facilitating cultural exchange between, within and outside Zimbabwe. This includes joint cultural celebrations between the Zimbabwean Tonga and Zambian Tonga, particularly the Lwiindi celebrations, a cultural ceremony where Tonga people give thanks to the Gods for a good harvest, as well as praying for good health. In 2011, the Lwiindi ceremony held in Sinazongwe was attended by more than five hundred people, including government departments, chiefs and ngoma groups from Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

This paper presents the Tonga identity as socially constructed or invented, or imagined by other groups. Although there is need for further research to establish the origins of Tonga identity constructions, the negative projection by the colonial rule and dominant groups, both before independence and after independence, gives some cues about the origin of the Tonga’s received identity. This paper also illustrates the integration of identity promotion and wider development issues. But this has not been a straightforward venture. It has taken interventionist forms, where the Tonga have adopted radical approaches to have their language introduced into school curricula. They have also adopted non-interventionist approaches by not upsetting the status quo, but rather used the ‘can do’

23. <http://www.mulonga.net>.

approaches, particularly through cultural activities, to demonstrate their capability to advance both their development and identity needs. Within these approaches, however, there are spontaneous activities, which bring people together from various Tonga groups, creating a common identity, which has helped to dispel myths, invented or created identity. Presenting the Tonga as a homogenous group is a major limitation of this paper. Yet there exists sub-groups with inherent inter- and intra-group tensions. Further research may reveal the extent to which inter- and intra-group tensions pose challenges in sustaining efforts by the post-Kariba resettlement generation in promoting Tonga identity.

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CHAPTER III

Art and the Sacred Practitioner Among the Zimbabwe Tonga: An Analysis of the Symbolic Interaction

Maxwell Mukova¹ and Jeremiah Chikovore²

Introduction

It has long been noted that the interactive relationship between religion and art in Africa remains understudied and little understood. This observation is especially true when applied to the Tonga arts in Zimbabwe. It has been simple for scholars of both religion and art to loosely list artistic products without delving into their meanings. There is an interest in African artefacts, as evidenced by the volumes of archaeological studies devoted to them and the collections in Western museums but the value attached to them has largely been commercial (Hackett 1994). In initial contacts between Western missionaries and the indigenous people in Zimbabwe, most art related to religious belief and practice was deliberately misrepresented as primitive, tribal and magical fetishes, thus debasing them of any religious significance.

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Attitudes toward African artistic expression changed in the 1970s when social anthropologists were urged to loosen their pragmatist grip on the study of African arts and allow for questions of meaning and philosophical interpretation to be given attention (Fagg 1973). Doing so allowed for exploration of the meanings in religious art among believing communities.

This study places the Tonga arts within the context of religion and explores the relationship between art and the sacred practitioner, thus providing an interpretive context for the religious meaning of art. An exploration of its nature and depth ultimately demonstrates the logic of Tonga cosmology. Guided by the phenomenological approach, this paper is concerned with a systematic study of religion through its phenomena, or that which presents itself to our senses (Bleeker 1972). Such an approach interrogates religious phenomena for its meaning, through empathy, and avoids imposing the researcher's personal value judgments. It contends that after classifying and describing phenomena, their inner meaning, logic and underlying structures should be probed.

We begin by explaining key concepts and background, before discussing four key roles among Zimbabwean Tonga religious practitioners. After that we outline the identity and characterizations of dominant traditional art forms. Finally, we analyse the symbolic functions of art as they appear within the mediational realms of the sacred practitioners.

Key Concepts of Tonga Religious Phenomenology

Despite the inherent difficulties of definition, particularly within the religious discourse, a sacred practitioner can be generally understood as 'one who holds for the religious community a role which in various ways, times and locations connects the community with what it regards as being of

unrestricted value' (Cox 1992: 104). During mediations, sacred practitioners enable the sacred to manifest itself and for people to respond appropriately. They function in both ritual and non-ritual contexts, though their roles are usually in the former.

It is possible to be a sacred practitioner just once in a lifetime or several times (Cox 1992). Practitioners can be classified into three categories – as priestly, prophetic or holy persons – but such classification is defective because their roles overlap widely. In line with Cox (1992), we use sacred practitioner in this paper to refer to anyone among the Zimbabwean Tonga who mediates to various degrees between the human and the sacred realms. This includes those who at face value might appear to have nothing to do with religion in the strictest sense of the word.

In terms of what constitutes the sacred, Eliade (1964) defines it as opposite to the profane. The profane is ordinary while the sacred is 'reality that does not belong to our world' (Cox 1995: 353). The sacred could be a realm of spiritual beings, or a god in theistic religions, the source of religious awareness and worship, central to human faith, practices and existence (Otto 1969). Due to the globalizing effect of theistic religions, especially Christianity, most cultures now identify the sacred more and more in theistic terms. Likewise, the Tonga people in Zimbabwe have not been spared the influence of Western Christianity.

Traditionally the Tonga believed in the existence of an ancestral realm, or abode of the dead. (Borrowing from the concept of hybridity as used in post-colonial discourses (Ashcroft et al. 2003), the term traditional is employed to refer to the inherited cultural aspects of the Tonga cosmology and does not imply being static and unchanging, particularly given the said influence of missionary Christianity on the Tonga.) The Tonga had a dual world view of living humans and of

spirits, or *muzimu*, who commute between the two worlds and affected people's lives positively or negatively depending on the relationship between them. *Muzimu* were the spirits of deceased family members from either the father or mother's line. The living sought to manipulate these through worship to obtain protection, good health and life, rain, children, good marriages and on the whole avoid misfortune. *Muzimu* punished if they were forgotten or if people departed from custom, and likewise conferred blessings when they were acknowledged and worshipped. Several different types of spirit existed, as well as a high God known as *Leza* who controlled everything but was never to be approached directly (Colson 1962). Sacred practitioners among the Tonga thus played the role of mediating between the community of the living and ancestral spirits in various contexts, both ritual and non-ritual.

Sacred Practitioners Among the Tonga: Identity, Roles and Contexts

Because a survey of the full array of sacred practitioners is not possible here, we have chosen to focus on four that played key roles in traditional Tonga life.

Diviner or herbalist: these people had the ability to discern the nature of illness or a problem and prescribe therapy that is ritual, behavioural or medicinal (Shoko 1993). They mediated for individuals, families, villages or a whole chiefdom when a community encountered problems like illness, suspicion of witchcraft, theft, deaths of people and livestock. One became a diviner through training, by being host to a spirit (be it family or alien), or through more mythical ways like being taken by mermaids. This type of sacred practitioner was regularly consulted for advice. Some Christian converts still

consult them, albeit secretly because such conduct is considered impious in mainstream Christian religions. If there were rituals to be performed the diviner led on the behalf of those affected.

Midwives: among the Tonga, as in many other cultures, birth was a sacred process that could not pass unnoticed (Aijmer 1972). At the marriage of his daughter, a father asked the ancestors to bless her with children, which were viewed as gifts willed from them (Colson 1962). These spirits were needed at childbirth to guide the process so it would be safe for both mother and child. Traditionally, childbirth was handled by midwives who were elderly women who attained competence by serving in apprenticeship or coming under the influence of a spirit. Their involvement did not start at the point when a woman went into labour, but well before to allow them to monitor the pregnancy, administer herbs and regulate the pregnant woman's sexual practice. The functions of the midwife went beyond being merely technical to being spiritual. For example, by being familiar with the totems of the family into which a child was being born, the midwife could more effectively perform protective rituals against witchcraft and other evil influences.

Territorial medium: a territory in this case refers to a unit of land with inhabitants under a chief. The administration by chiefs among the Tonga was a phenomenon arising from the colonial encounter. There used to be the *ulanyika*, or the first settler in a territory, upon whom depended the welfare of the community (Colson 1962). It was these people – either male or female – who would normally become territorial spirits upon death or who were expected to mediate between the community and the territorial spirits. These individuals were most visible in rainmaking ceremonies. Spirits would possess a territorial medium, who would organize rainmaking

ceremonies at the beginning of each planting season and direct the ritual petitioning to ensure a plentiful harvest.

Family elder: though Tonga society is matrilineal, the family patriarch also occupies significant sacral roles in linking his family to the ancestors (Colson 1962). Traditionally, the oldest among the living were considered to be the closest to the ancestral dead and thus to possess better knowledge of spirits (this likely has changed with HIV/AIDS as the young tend to die earlier). While individuals could directly approach family ancestral spirits, the family elder (either patriarch or matriarch) was considered best positioned to do so and often mediated the ancestral world on behalf of family members dealing with problems like illness, deaths in succession, unemployment and barrenness.

Religious Uses of Art Among the Tonga

Despite the absence of a word for art in many African languages, scholars have not disputed its existence (Hackett 1994). Scholarly attention to art in Zimbabwe has focused on the Shona and Ndebele, but little effort has been made to organically place Tonga arts within a world of spiritual belief, even though such a discussion allows for an understanding of their spiritual symbolic values. Thus here we look at the major forms of music, dance, costume, poetry and woodcarving that led the Tonga into sacred spaces.

Music was a feature that facilitated ritual divination, rainmaking ceremonies, ancestor veneration, and rituals to bring back ancestral spirits. Songs formed the most common and main feature of music among the Tonga, dominating life from birth to death. They usually were accompanied by a variety of other instruments. Hand pianos were typically

placed in decorated gourds to resonate the sound. Leg and hand rattles produced sound resulting from body movements, and hand clapping or the use of decorated wooden clappers was also common. Drumming was particularly loaded with religious, social and political connotations. Beating drums in two or three combinations of size and force produced different melodious sound patterns traditionally directed to particular spirits, either ancestral or alien. Of note among the Tonga, decorated drums were also incorporated into mainline Christian and African Initiated Churches.

Together with song, hand and wooden clapping, and hand and leg rattles, the Tonga also utilized dance as a central part of their ritual life. Costume in the form of regalia, jewellery and ornamentation were inherent in traditional Tonga material culture. Headdresses and ornamentation in the form of beads and jewellery abounded and appeared in both musical and non-musical settings, ritual and non-ritual settings (Irvine and Weekley 1972).

Poetry also formed part of Tonga artistic culture. It appeared as part of music, dance, and song or was used separately in prayers to the ancestors. This speech was highly ideophonic and was sometimes accompanied by handclapping.

The Tonga additionally had various handicrafts used in both art and for traditional technology. Pottery was decorated with incisions and, more recently, paint. Other decorated artefacts like carved wooden bowls, staffs, dancing axes and snuffboxes went beyond their pragmatic purposes and were used by family heads, chiefs and diviners in ritual ceremonies.

All of these were exploited in the workings of sacred practitioners. In the case of diviners/herbalists, for example, during divining sessions they (or their aides) led songs accompanied by drumming, dance, leg and hand rattles and hand clapping in order to facilitate possession (and at the end, the exorcism) of a spirit. The diviner also utilized costume to varying

degrees, from putting on full ritual regalia to strapping themselves with pieces of white and black cloth (or red and black if the diviner was host to alien spirits). They also carried variously decorated staffs, hand axes, snuffboxes and pottery ware.

Among midwives who were hosts to spirits of former midwives, varying forms of ancestral clothing, headdresses, bangles and beads were used. Songs were also central to the functions of the midwives, but usually calm songs. At the commencement of the delivery process, the midwife poetically invoked her own ancestors and those of the family into which a child was being born. This was accompanied by hand clapping and dropping some snuff on to the ground. At the end of the birthing process, various herbs contained in traditional clay pots were administered to both the mother and newborn baby. While not all midwives used all art forms at once, they invariably used some in their tasks.

Family elders also possessed ancestral regalia – pieces of cloth in the colour combination of white and black – which they placed on their shoulders or on the ground when communicating with ancestors. Some family elders possessed ancestral staffs, snuffboxes and dancing hand axes, which they used when leading family rituals. During these, they were expected to lead in ritual songs and dance. When communicating with the spirits, they used poetic and metaphorically rich linguistic expressions, normally accompanied by hand clapping.

Territorial spirit mediums and the territorial leader (*ulanyika*) employed art forms on behalf of the neighbourhood, and these continued to be functional even when the introduction of chiefs reduced their influence. Because territorial mediums were mainly responsible for ceremonies to request adequate rainfall and a productive agricultural season free of floods and lightning, they presided over the whole rainmaking ritual from preparation to end. In order to link with ancestors, they ritually adorned themselves with costume and used singing, dance,

drums and other artefacts. When approaching the rain shrine, they rhythmically clapped cupped hands – with a team of dancers wearing hand and legs rattles – and propitiated the ancestors in poetic language. Beer was left in clay pots at the shrine and the territorial medium may or may not have undergone possession. At the death of a rainmaker, the territorial spirit medium was often expected to lead the funeral.

Interpretation of the Art/Sacred Practitioner Relationship

In interpreting the significance of these arts in the functioning of the sacred practitioner, we are guided by the controversial but valid philosophy that meaning in African epistemological attitudes and structures is inductive rather than deductive. It does not lie in mathematical precision but in the general suggestiveness of phenomena (Anyanwu 1987). Among the Tonga, the value of art went beyond what the material artefacts would ordinarily stand for, encapsulating the general framework of the ancestral world.

In various ways Tonga sacred practitioners utilized traditional music because of its symbolic value. Songs were expressive and communicative. They communicated to the ancestors what the community wished for or feared. Where spirit possession took place, a song with its various accompaniments was what called the spirits to possess the host so they could listen, mediate and express ancestral demands. At the end of possession, it was also used to accompany the spirits on their journey back to the spiritual world. The Tonga believed that ancestors were the living dead and in their realm also sang and danced to traditional music (Johnston 1975). During rituals, songs, drumming and dance

provided a familiar traditional environment for ancestral spirits and thus they were drawn into the realm of man. Accompanying hand clapping was a sign of reverence and welcome for the spirits – an acknowledgement of the spirit's seniority and wisdom, necessary to provide for and guide the living.

The use of costume was also necessitated by the symbolism embedded in them. Different colour combinations of cloth, headdresses, beads and bangles marked practitioners separate from ordinary community members and allowed them to confidently mediate. The ornaments and costume pointed to an antiquity and provided a magical link to the ancestral spirits, who traditionally dressed in such ornaments. The colour black represented family spirits, while red represented alien spirits; depending on the ancestral spirit to which they were host, different practitioners wore the appropriate colour for their costume. The colour white came to have Christian connotations of holiness, but traditionally represented cleansed ancestral spirits, especially after the cleansing ceremony when the deceased became a family ancestor in the fold of other ancestors. Different colour combinations thus appealed to the different spirits being mediated.

Other forms of art such as staffs, snuffboxes, pottery and wooden bowls were symbolic of spirits as well. A staff, with or without elaborate artistry, was usually an ancestral heritage and symbolic of ancestral presence, protection and power. The dancing axe was traditionally used (among other things) in wars to fight enemies. Snuffboxes were old and familiar to ancestors who used to take snuff and use it ritually. Because all of these items lured the ancestors to the realm of the present-day community, most practitioners used them in performing their roles.

As regards pottery and wooden bowls, the traditional Tonga generally believed that ancestral spirits detested contact with

metal products (most of which were post-colonial, hence regarded as alien). Some traditional practitioners would not use metal plates or cups for cooking, eating or drinking. Thus the various wooden bowls used to hold grain for presentation to spirits during rainmaking ceremonies and clay pots for beer were suggestive of a traditional past when earthenware and wooden bowls were in use for almost everything. It was this past that great family and territorial ancestral spirits recognized, and their use created an environment that was not alien or detested by the ancestral spirits.

Similarly, the metaphorically rich language used in various incantations was representative of the traditional and mythical past when only Chitonga was used. It pointed back to a time before adulteration of the language occurred through the addition of English and other dialectical infusions.

Conclusion

Sacred practitioners among the Tonga required, as a necessity, various forms of art in order for them to perform their mediational role between the community and ancestral spirits. Indeed, it was impossible for them to perform without art, which created receptive environments for the sacred to manifest itself. Sacred practitioners, in both space and time, were qualitatively transformed through song, dance, costume, poetry and various carved items to become 'wholly and holy other' (Otto 1969). Arts allowed them to access the sacred and deliver messages such that an interactive relationship was maintained between the living and their ancestors, whose spirits positively and negatively affected their lives on a daily basis.

Most Tonga arts pointed to the spirits and it was this symbolism that made the relationship between art and the

sacred practitioner intrinsic and logical. Inner laws of spirituality in Tonga cosmology engendered the necessity of it: the link was neither accidental nor by choice, but logically it had to be, if practitioners were to effectively form a sacred bridge between the living and the dead.

Ancestral spirits were objects of traditional worship by individuals, families, neighbourhoods, and chiefdoms. Further research needs to investigate the wider interconnectedness of traditional Tonga religious phenomena, while yet taking into account historical perceptions by researchers grounded in Western Christianity who often treated their artefacts as fetishes and magic, rather than essential parts of a coherent cosmological system. The liberative ethos of religious phenomenology, in emphasizing empathy, by contrast does much to uncover a section of the Zimbabwean population often despised as backward and unsophisticated.

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CHAPTER IV

Names of Cattle and the Cattle-Naming System Among the Tonga of Zambia

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Abstract

Examining names, whether of cattle, people or rivers, reveals a wealth of information about a society and the economic and social environments of those who give names. The study of names is carried out using the methodologies of onomastics or onomatology, which is the study of nomenclature in general. Within this field there are many subdivisions of study, one of which is zoonymy, focusing on names of animals. This paper relates to zoonymy and, in particular, discusses the sources and meanings of names and naming systems for cattle among the Tonga of Zambia. Within this, the paper looks at the role of cattle names in reconstructing Tonga culture, shedding light on the Tonga people's social world view, socio-economic milieu and the value they attach to cattle.

The relative social value attached to each category of names in this study is assumed to be proportional to the number of distinct names it comprises; meaning, simply, that the more

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times certain types of names appear, the greater the value they express. Multiplicity of names in a given category thus signals subject matter of great relative social importance to the community. This paper establishes that cattle are not simply viewed as collective possessions, and that each animal is given a separate and specific identity by its owner, which may be reflected in its name. The paper also shows that, just like personal names, names of cattle among Tongas are not given unmindfully. Rather, they relate to the immediate natural environment and social setup, and they reflect the beliefs and customs of the Tonga people.

Introduction

This paper is primarily concerned with Tonga people living in Southern Province, Zambia, though Tonga also live in neighbouring Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean Tonga are found in and around the Binga, Gokwe, Hwange and Kariba districts in the Province of Matabeleland Northern Zimbabwe (Hachipola 1998). In Zambia, Tonga trace their origins back to at least the twelfth century, which makes them the first ethnic group to settle in that region (but see Musonda, this volume, for archaeological evidence of a much longer presence in the region). Presently, in Zambia the Tonga people are concentrated in the south along the Kafue and Zambezi Rivers and around the plateau.

The Tonga language, Chitonga, belongs to the Bantu language family, and was classified by Guthrie (1948) as part of the Lenje-Tonga group of Zambia, while Doke (1943) classifies Tonga in the central linguistic zone of the country, and is the main language in that zone. The Tonga people are related to other linguistic groupings such as the Ila, Toka Leya, Soli and Lenje.

In Zambia, Tonga is made up of geographical dialects, the two most prominent of which are Valley Tonga – spoken in the Zambezi River Valley and on the shores of Kariba Dam – and Plateau Tonga, spoken on the southern plateau of Zambia.

The names of cattle referenced in this paper were obtained as part of ongoing research documenting the names and naming system of animals amongst Tonga people in Monze district, Southern Province (Zambia) using open-ended interviews. Names were collected from households, as well as explanations from owners about the source and meanings of the names. The data collected from the interviews was categorized, coded and analysed in terms of themes. Informant data was further verified and substantiated in analysis using native-speaker intuition. Tongaland covers a very large geographic area and future research will demonstrate whether or not, and to what degree, the present data is similar to other Tonga communities in Southern Province.

Acquisition and Uses of Cattle

The Tonga acquire cattle in various ways. Traditionally, animals were passed on from one relative to another or were received through inheritance claims, called *kukona*. Young men were given cattle by their parents, uncles or grandparents. Apart from inheritance claims, parents, especially fathers, can also acquire cattle from payments of bride price (Cliggett 2003: 216–17). In some instances Tonga working in the urban areas do buy cattle, which are herded by their kin, as they prepare for retirement (Colson and Chona 1965: 43). In fact, of late, more and more people have resorted to buying cattle for themselves. To some extent this could be attributed to the changing social setup in the Tonga society. The introduction of inheritance laws that protect children and widows has made

it difficult for relatives to inherit and hence acquire cattle and any other property from a dead person's estate.

Among the valley Tonga, as Cliggett (2003: 217) notes, men have better chances of accumulating cattle than do women. This is because men can build a herd of cattle through various ways. They can accumulate cattle through the bride price system, purchase with wage earnings and inheritance. On the other hand women usually acquire animals as gifts from a relative and in some occasions from their portion of their daughter's bride price. Cliggett (2003: 220) observes that women's access to cattle may be limited by a male-focused bride-price system, lack of significant cash earning options (compared to male migration for wage earning, income from cash crops, etc.) and gendered inheritance practices that keep cattle in the hands of men.

Traditionally the Tonga are agriculturalists (Colson and Chona 1965; Gausset 1998). They mainly grow maize as a cash crop and additionally rear cattle. The socio-economic role of cattle in the traditional sector manifests in multiple, often symbolic, ways. For instance, cattle have always been regarded as a symbol of wealth (Cliggett 2003: 215; Colson and Chona 1965: 42; Gausset 1998: 44; Larson 1966: 367; Lungu 2003: 2). Owning animals is both a symbol of wealth and an investment strategy amongst the Gwembe Tonga (Cliggett 2003: 215). In this regard she recites an instance where many people did not view a local shopkeeper as 'wealthy' because he did not have cattle.

On the value of cattle as a symbol of wealth, Lungu (2003: 2) further notes that the Tonga households that do not own any animals are usually considered the poorest, while those with large numbers of animals are rich members of the community. Lack of cattle is associated with abject poverty. Hence when someone dies, people are interested to know how many animals he owned; a man who dies leaving many cattle is considered to have been a 'real' man and very rich.

Recent environmental factors and animal diseases, however, have changed the Tonga way of life. Poor soil and irregular rainfall have made farming difficult. Constant droughts and outbreaks of animal disease, such as corridor and foot and mouth disease, have depleted the cattle population in the province, threatening an age-old tradition. For the Tonga people, the loss of cattle is not simply an economic loss but the erosion of heritage and culture. In response, they have had to diversify into rearing more disease-resistant livestock such as goats, pigs and donkeys, which were previously regarded as relatively unimportant. The loss of cattle to environmental factors, foot and mouth disease and corridor diseases has also made ownership of cattle more prestigious among the Tonga (Araki 2001: 198)

In recent years the Tonga have increasingly begun to think of cattle as an economic asset rather than a means of acquiring prestige. In this regard Cliggett (2003: 216) observes that although cattle do not provide a regular income like a business, they do provide security for financial emergencies. During the years when the Southern Province of Zambia inhabited by the Tonga experienced a lot of droughts, the sale of cattle, goats, pigs and chickens has generated income to buy grain and sometimes these animals are exchanged for grain, thereby alleviating food insecurity (Lungu 2003: 1–2).

There are other uses of cattle among the Tonga noted by Colson and Chona (1965) and Gausset (1998). For centuries, Tonga cattle were multi-purpose animals useful for a variety of domestic needs and subsistence farming tasks. Their by-products played a significant role in daily life: cow dung, for example, provided manure for fertilizing fields (before modern fertilizers came along, which are now preferred), for binding the mud of traditional huts, strengthening the roofs of homes, and sealing leakages in huts and buckets (before the advent of cement and brick). Milk, another key by-product, is

consumed either fresh or fermented as *mabisi*. From *mabisi*, the Tonga people traditionally extracted cream or butter that they used for anointing their bodies, for trade and for eating, especially as cooking oil. Cattle skins yielded leather, which saw service in the production of shoes, ropes for ploughing, beds, chairs, thongs and mats. These days, however, the use of skins has declined as the people increasingly turn to plastic and other modern industrial items.

In addition to yielding by-products, the cattle themselves are used to meet household needs. Cows are reserved for milk production and reproduction, while oxen are an essential agricultural necessity among the Tonga. Oxen are used for ploughing, drawing sledges, carts and wagons, which still provide the bulk of the transportation for farm produce (Colson and Chona 1965: 42; Cliggett 2003: 215). Heifers are reserved for bride price payments and bulls are kept for reproduction. Young oxen and old cows are also traditionally slaughtered for meat during initiation ceremonies, funerals and other social and ritual events. Cattle are also used for settlement of different types of claims, damage suits and exchanged with friends to cement informal alliances (Colson and Chona 1965: 43).

Theoretical Framework

This paper draws on the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic determinism for its theoretical framework. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis claims that there is a systematic relationship between the grammatical categories of the language a person speaks and how that person both understands the world and behaves in it (Martin 1986). The hypothesis also postulates that language both influences and reflects our view of the world. Employing this framework, we show that the essence

of cattle within Tonga society determines people's perspectives towards the animals, hence the reason why they have these numerous ways of referring to, distinguishing and naming the animals.

In addition to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, this paper will also draw some theoretical insights from Kripke's (1980) perspectives articulated in his 'Naming and Necessity' (refer also to Soames 2002). Despite some critique of Kripke's work, his argument that names can either be regarded as rigid designators or non-rigid designators is appropriate for the current analysis of Tonga cattle naming. Kripke first introduced the notions of rigid and non-rigid designation in the course of his argument against descriptivist theories of reference.

According to Kripke (1980: 293), rigid designators refer to the same entity in every possible world. Specifically he gives the following two possible definitions of a rigid designator:

- (a) x is rigid if x designates the same object in every possible world
- (b) x is rigid if x designates the same object in every possible world in which that object exists

For example if a name of an animal is to be regarded as a rigid designator it should refer to the same entity – in this case the same animal – in all conceivable worlds and in all circumstances. Kripke argues that only proper names can be regarded as rigid designators. On the other hand, non-rigid or flaccid designators may refer to different entities in different possible worlds (Kripke 1980: 293). They refer to entities only by use of contingent properties that the entity being referred to has. They are non-rigid because they can actually pick out vastly different objects in different possible worlds. Names of animals that could be used with reference to other animals at the same time will be regarded as flaccid designators in this paper. In

this category we have designators that are descriptive or collective terms used to refer to cattle. However, in our discussion it will be shown that some non-rigid designators could actually graduate to become rigid designators when they are transformed into proper names for individual animals.

In our analysis of names we have used the concept of rigid designator with reference to names that designate the same object in every possible world. On the other hand, the concept of non-rigid designator has been used with reference to names given to cattle that may not necessarily designate the same object in every possible world. These could be used to refer to any cattle at any given time.

Cattle-Naming System: How, By Whom and For What Purpose

Numerous studies have focused on personal names. Within such research, there is general consensus that personal names in a given society are not given at random. Mashiri (2003), in his study of Shona Christian personal names, proposes that the choice of a name is linked to the communicative intentions of the name-giver. Lisimba (2000), in his study of Lozi personal names, notes that these not only reveal the immediate natural environment and social activities of the community but also reflect its traditional beliefs and customs. To a great extent, given what the author's research has established so far, this can also be said about cattle names.

Among Tonga, cattle mirror human beings in having individual names. Thus they are not viewed simply as collective possessions; each has a separate and distinct identity to its owner. When a Tonga is talking about his cattle to someone who does not realize he is referring to an animal, it is not uncommon for the listener to assume the subject of conversation

is a human being. A cattle owner may mention that Mutinta has given birth and Choolwe has died, while the listener's impression – erroneously – is that he is speaking about a person.

As will be seen from the type of names given to cattle among the Tonga, these names are bestowed either at birth or later in the life of the animal. Names that are based on the circumstances surrounding the birth of the animal are given at birth. Names stemming from circumstances at the acquisition of the animal can be given at any time. Names referring to behavioural characteristics of the animal are given later in life when these particular habits begin to manifest themselves.

Generally owners of the animals give names to cattle, but in some instances any member of the household, especially if he is male, can also name the animal. The men tend to be the ones to give names to animals because they are closely associated with them as herders. Among the Plateau Tonga men are usually responsible for herding livestock while women are responsible for cultivation. The owner of the cattle would give names to his cattle most often when there were certain circumstances, events or individuals he wished to honour or remember through his animals.

Various reasons were suggested for giving cattle names. Respondents indicated that they gave names because animals respond to them. This made for easy identification and handling and training, especially for draught purposes. Other reasons had to do with remembrance of important or valued events and people, accountability, and easy control and supervision of cattle. Some respondents declared that the practice of naming animals was inherent in Tonga custom and tradition. Finally, names may be given to communicate various messages through the choice of the name given to the cattle.

Cattle Names as Non-Rigid Designators

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (or linguistic relativity hypothesis) claims there is a systematic relationship between the grammatical categories of the language a person speaks and how that person both understands the world and behaves in it. The hypothesis also postulates that language both influences and reflects our view of the world. Focusing on the Eskimos, linguists and researchers such as Martin (1986) observed that the language of the Eskimos had numerous distinct words for snow: *aput* ('snow on the ground'), *qana* ('falling snow'), *piqsirpoq* ('drifting snow'), *pokatok* ('grainy, salt-like snow') and many more. This contrasts greatly with English, for example, which is essentially limited to simply 'snow' and/or 'frost'. Anthropologists concluded that the Eskimos have many words for snow because they view snow quite differently from other cultures and because they deal with snow far more frequently.

Among Tonga people, cattle-naming traditions are based in deeply rooted cultural and social environments. To some extent the multiplicity of terms and linguistic usages relating to cattle serve as an index of the social significance of cattle for the Tonga just as the multiplicity of names given to snow among the Eskimos reflect their view and the significance of snow in their lives. Cattle are given names and labels that reflect the emotional identification and proliferation of cultural attitudes, norms and values concerning livestock among the Tonga. Thus examining name sources, meanings, significance and the circumstances in which they are given helps to reconstruct the cultural, social and economic environments of Tonga people, their view of the world and the value they attach to cattle.

Among the Tonga cattle are given collective and individual names. The collective names are for the general categorization of cattle based on their distinct characteristics, age or

appearance. In the category of such names are designations such as the term *ng'ombe*, which is used to refer to cattle in general; castrated bulls are referred to as *basune*; uncastrated bulls are referred to as *bacende*; heifers are referred to as *mpwizyi*; producing cows are referred to as *inzyazyi*; suckling cattle are referred to as *boombe*; a cow which cannot reproduce is referred to as *nsundi*; a very big and productive bull is called *mupoho*; an animal just beginning to develop horns is called *citole*, while one that does not develop horns is called *mukotoolo*; a nursing cow is referred to as *ilila mwana*; and a very large ox is designated as *ngolongolo*. The term *vumba* is used to refer to a grayish animal while *mulala* is the term used to refer to a black animal with white spots. Drawing from Kripke's (1980) concepts of rigid and non-rigid designators we have referred to these collective names as non-rigid designators. This is based on the fact that these do not refer to any specific animal but can be used to refer to or describe any animal that bears such characteristics portrayed by the name. Among the Tongas some of these non-rigid designations could end up graduating to become rigid designators. In this respect they end up being used as actual names given to some individual animals.

Cattle Names as Rigid Designators

Apart from the above flaccid collective terms given to animals among the Tonga, the Tonga also give their cattle distinct 'proper' names which could fall in the category of Kripke's rigid designators. These names can be said to be rigid designators because they are used to refer only to the individual animals so named. According to Kripke identities involving rigid designators are necessary. Among the Tonga names that are given to animals and used as rigid designators are essential for various reasons as outlined above.

To some extent it can be said that such names show that among the Tonga, cattle mirror human beings in having individual names, demonstrating the point made previously that cattle are not viewed simply as collective possessions – each animal having a separate and distinct identity to its owner.

However, we have discovered that the naming of cattle depends on the number of cattle someone has. Hence while someone that has a small number of animals may give names to all his animals, a cattle owner that has a lot of cattle may not give names to all his animals. In this case only a few of these animals will be given individual names. The animals that will be given names will be those with certain distinct characteristics or those that are the owner's favourites.

Explaining Sources and Meaning of Names

From the research conducted, the author has established that names are not mere labels given to distinguish animals from each other. They are almost always highly suggestive and loaded with social, historical and experiential meaning. With regard to personal names, most languages tend to have a pool from which the majority of names are drawn. This does not seem to be the case for Tonga cattle names as the sources and types of names that can be given to cattle are diverse.

The sources of names of Tonga cattle fall into the following categories: names based on people, names inherited from other cattle, names derived from circumstances, names of endearment, names based on countries and places, names alluding to breed, appearance and physical features, names referring to behavioural characteristics, names stemming from religious beliefs and names based on clans. Cattle names in all these categories can be from within the language, Chitonga,

or can be of foreign origin (that is, other languages). The names that are of foreign origin are mainly from English. However, there are also a few that are from other Zambian languages. It is unsurprising English names for cattle are commonplace, as it is the official and national language of Zambia, and cuts across all ethnic groupings. Furthermore, it is regarded as a prestigious language; most Zambians, including those of average education, like to be associated with it.

Cattle Names Based on People

This category constitutes one of the largest. As a rule, names of cattle based upon people are inherited, either directly or indirectly. In direct inheritance, the name given to an animal belongs or once belonged to a deceased family member. Such names help to cement social relations as well as to act as a 'living record' of family genealogies. In indirect inheritance, the names given to the animals are not associated with family members.

Names of cattle based on people, whether by direct or indirect inheritance, are given to animals for a variety of reasons. The eponym could be a chief, or a respected and heroic person whom the cattle owner wants to remember through his animal. It is sometimes hoped that the qualities of the honoured person will manifest themselves in the beast. An ox named after a powerful person is expected to manifest greater strength than other oxen. Social relations are expressed in the idiom of cattle culture; cattle are thus used as symbols of these social relations and the individuals they are named after.

Names of direct inheritance are bestowed to honour family members. A deceased relative's name may be assigned to an animal so that the name does not fall into disuse. Symbolically, this keeps the dead relative alive and the animal becomes

linked to both the dead and living in that it reminds the living, through its name, of the deceased relative. Sometimes, names of relatives are given to cattle because those relatives passed away about the same time the animal was acquired or born.

Many people tended to give names of their grandparents, sisters, uncles, aunts and parents. Grandparents featured most prominently, especially grandmothers. This is surely an indication of the attachment to and respect for grandparents and the elderly among Tonga; and in fact, in most Tonga households, grandmothers are the best loved. That names inherited from relatives are most common suggests that social relationships are very important among Tonga people. Cattle names define social relations between people and those relations are expressed in the 'idiom' of the cattle-naming culture.

The list of family names is limitless, as any name of a relative one wishes to honour can be given. Shimonde was conferred to remind the owner of his grandfather who died by drowning at the time of the calf's birth. Names such as Mukamaluba and Kaapa (which means, literally, 'grandmother', were commonly given to remind owners of their grandmothers. Deceased sisters were honoured in names such as Maggie or Stalia, while deceased fathers showed up in Elijah, Mweemba, and Willison, for example. If a beloved family member is honoured by the giving of their name to an animal, that fortunate animal will also receive a corresponding degree of love and adoration from the owner.

Other cattle names inherited from people are derived from prominent figures in society. These can be political figures, chiefs and prosperous businessmen. Cattle names commonly reflected this: Mungaila is a cow named for a chief in the Namwala district; Mwanachingwala for one in Mazabuka district. One owner named his bull Hamusonde, after a chief in Monze, because the bull was the most respected animal in his kraal.

In modern society, politicians have also come to assume significant and powerful roles. Next to chiefs they are the most respected people in most Zambian communities today; and similarly possess admirable qualities that owners hope will manifest in their animals. Politicians may be local or foreign. Mandela was given to an animal by one man who wanted to remember the former South African president in that way.

Businessmen with great wealth and even entertainers also earn esteem. An informant expressed that he so admires a famous businessman of Indian origin in the Mazabuka district that he named his animal Bhagoos. Rumba music from the Democratic Republic of the Congo has risen to such popularity among Zambian people of all ages – despite the fact that they do not understand the words (sung in Swahili or Lingala) – that Loketo, one especially talented musician, also featured prominently among recent cattle names.

Names Based on Clan Names

Tonga society is marked by a distinct clan system called *mikowa*. Every Tonga inherits a clan from his or her parents, thus belonging to one on the father's side, *kumausyi*, and another on the mother's side, *kumanyina* or *kumukowa*. Tonga people want to be reminded of their clans. Someone who belongs to the Bansanje clan might name his animal Munsanje, while someone who belongs to the Bakonka clan would name his animal Mukonka. Such names assume gender specification for cows: for example, a cow belonging to a member of the Munsanje clan would be called Mukabansanje ('wife of the Bansanje'). It should be noted that these can also be used as personal names.

Names Inherited from Other Cattle

Just as it is common among human beings to inherit names of deceased relatives, some cattle names are inherited from other animals. Some cattle owners give their livestock names of other cattle with good characteristics worth 'passing on' (hopefully by the act of bestowing the name). Choolobwe commemorated a previous beloved animal; Bantom was taken from a white farmer's cow with this name; Bow Tie and Colgate were given because the owner's uncle and father, respectively, had animals named as such. It is interesting to note that these names can be inherited from cattle that are still alive or those that are dead. To some extent the naming of one's animal with the name of another person's animal displays respect for the other human owner of the animal whose name has been inherited.

Names Derived from Circumstances

Referring to personal names, Klerk and Bosch (1996) note that African names have meaning. They may be given to send a message that may provide information on the circumstances of the family at the time of the birth of the owner of the name. Some names are given to give thanks to God for the gift of the child or to relate to one's past fears or events in people's lives.

Cattle names derived from circumstances likewise also symbolize the rich social experiences that name givers wish to share with their communities. They indicate the special coincidental or peculiar context into which the animal was acquired or born, or perhaps something that it survived. Given in commemoration of such occurrences, these names might refer to social or political events, natural disasters, socio-psychological experiences or environmental matters. They

serve, in essence, as historical records for the owner, family and wider community. Indeed, in traditional Tonga society, cattle names were an oral record, a historical account of family and societal events. We discuss these below.

Names from Circumstance of Acquisition

In the past the Tonga generally acquired their first cattle by inheritance. Some animals were given to children by their parents, uncles, grandparents or other relatives, while other people acquired their first animals from inheritance in the form of *kukona* ('to inherit'), as mentioned earlier (refer also to Cliggett 2003). Such an animal might be named Chipecto ('gift').

Nowadays it is becoming increasingly common for people to acquire first animals through their own efforts, and the circumstances of these efforts are reflected in the names. One farmer named his animal Beans because he bought it using the profit from trading in beans. Another called his Cotton, for the same reason.

The economic situation in the country has pushed up the price of cattle, and if one is unexpectedly able to buy a good animal at a reasonable price, he may name his animal Choolwe ('luck'). Recurrent outbreaks of disease have meant that most farmers have depleted stocks of animals and very few are willing to sell. To find an animal to buy, it is sometimes necessary to move from one village to another; thus one persistent farmer thought to give his animal the name Atweende ('let's go') because he was only able to find the animal after walking long distances.

In traditional Tonga society, cattle were regarded as family property, although as noted by Cliggett (2003) and referenced above, men have a better chance of acquiring, accumulating

and owning cattle. To remind family members of the communal ownership and responsibility for cattle one would confer a name such as Mukwasyi ('family') on an animal. One benefit of such a name, ideally, is to remind household members of the importance of looking after the cattle as well.

It is very common among the Tonga to name their cattle after the people from whom, or the places from which, the animals were acquired. So animals named Kanyanga, Haakamangwe and Kanamudenda were acquired from Mr Kanyanga, Mr Haakamangwe and Mr Mudenda respectively.

On the other hand, Mwanachingwala, Moomba, Nansenga and Mazabuka are all areas where the animals were acquired. Sometimes animals are given place names because the people who facilitated their purchase live in those places, such as a man who named his animal Kabwe, because his brother, a resident of Kabwe, gave him the money to purchase it.

Names Based on Circumstances of Birth/Upbringing

Names in this category are given to cattle to indicate the peculiar or special circumstance under which an animal was born, came into being, survived or was raised. They may also provide information on the spatio-temporal circumstances of the birth of the animal. These are similar to personal names given in the same circumstances.

In recent years, the constant outbreaks of animal diseases in Southern Province have resulted in a lot of animal deaths. To a Tonga, the death of an animal is a very sad occasion, almost equal to the loss of a family member. Such deaths are announced not impersonally but by using the name of the animal. If the dead animal leaves a suckling calf, whose chances of survival are reduced, such a loss is more painful. The calf is regarded as an orphan, in much the same way a human baby

would be. The name Muchaala or Musyala ('he/she who remains behind') is usually given to such animals; the identical name is given to children whose mothers die at birth or when the children are in early infancy. Other names likely to be given in those circumstances are Mapenzi ('problems') or Choolwe ('luck'), which reflects the creature's good fortune in surviving.

Animals having trouble conceiving may require the administration of traditional herbs, just as humans with fertility problems may. Such animals or their calves may be given the name Michelo ('medicines/roots/herbs') to remind the owner of the trouble it took to achieve conception.

The birth of an animal is a very joyous occasion in a Tonga household. When an animal goes into labour, the household holds its breath, anxiously awaiting the birth of the new calf. Cattle born during the night are regarded as peculiar and as being born under special and somewhat difficult circumstances. This is marked by the name Busiku ('night'), which features prominently as a way to signify the hour they were born.

Cows that produce calves are often highly prized. A cow that gives birth to twins is most highly prized. This favourable animal might be given the name Lubono ('wealth') to reflect its contribution to the prosperity of the household. In turn its calves will be given names that symbolize that they are twins. Banji ('many') is given to the first twin to be born (whether human or animal). The second twin is usually named Nsanzya ('wash'), because it is regarded as having cleaned the womb.

Apart from high productivity, a cow will be highly appreciated if it frequently produces female calves as opposed to male ones, since females are bound to further increase the stock. There is sadness when a cow continuously produces only male calves. In the event that a female calf is eventually born, the animal will be called Mutinta ('she that changes or divides'), and the same practice is usual for a human boy or a

girl who follows a string of siblings of the same sex. It is unusual for a bull or heifer to be called Mutinta.

Names from Socio-Psychological Circumstances

Names from socio-psychological experience are based on the difficult social or psychological circumstances experienced by the owners of the animals. Poverty is one major issue reflected in such names. Mapenzi ('problems') and Chakatazya ('it is difficult') demonstrate that there were obvious life difficulties for the owner at the time the animal was born or acquired. These names occasionally cut across language, such as in Mabvuto ('problems'), borrowed from Nyanja.

Names from Communal or Family Events

Names in this category commemorate events that may have occurred at a special time or which deeply affected the family or community. Such events could be happy or sad and could be natural disasters, national events, continental events or even world events. The same names are given to cattle as would be given to people in the same circumstance.

National disasters like floods and famine are often remembered in cattle names. Miyoba ('heavy rain') appeared in several households with animals bought or acquired when there were floods in the region. In this way the 1987–88 rainy season, when the Southern Province of Zambia experienced bad flooding, is remembered and orally documented. Nzala ('hunger') is often bestowed on animals acquired during periods of food scarcity.

In Zambia, football is by far the most popular national sport. The excitement surrounding continental football tournaments

is commemorated in unusual names for cattle, even if this memorializes the successes of other countries. One such cattle owner in the 1990s named his animal Nigeria, in celebration of the achievements of the Nigerian team that year.

Important national and world events are also celebrated, such as in 2001 when Zambia experienced an eclipse of the sun that caused a frenzy of people to visit from all over the world (and a cow to be christened Eclipse). World religious events are also likewise reflected; Christmas is one common name for animals born around that time.

In some households, deaths, family conflicts, marriages or gatherings are remembered through their animals. Milumbe ('news/message') may be given to an animal born when news of a death in the family has been received. When a family member survives an attempted poisoning, an animal may be called Muzyoka ('he who returns'). Twaambo ('news/issues') tends to feature when some momentous family conflict occurred around the time of receiving the animal.

Marriages and other happy social gatherings are always worth remembering, especially if they coincide with the birth of an animal. One cattle owner whose animal was born when his sister was getting married named it after that sister, Mary; while Namakamu ('she of gatherings') reflects a general social gathering. One creative name, Matimba, is a stage in the fermentation process of the local alcoholic brew *chibuku*, which is what the owner's mother was busy with when the animal was born.

Names of Endearment

Along with other reasons for keeping cattle, Tonga are traditionally also motivated by simple affection for the animals. This attachment sometimes transcends the economic value of

the animals and, as a result, cattle owners are reluctant to sell some of their animals. Cattle loved to the point of inspiring song and dance and spared from manual labour are, unsurprisingly, bestowed with names of endearment. The most common name is Luyando ('love'), followed closely by Mubotu ('beautiful one'), a name reserved for animals regarded as being especially attractive.

Interestingly, some cattle owners give their own names to favourite animals to show their affection for them. These creatures are symbols of pride and are regarded as exhibiting superlative beauty, animals that owners would never dream of selling or killing. In fact the owner might stipulate that such animals should only be slaughtered during his or her funeral, or should be allowed to die a natural death. It is typical for unusual stories to develop around these cattle. Some of them, it is said, will low all day long when the owner dies, as if a supernatural attachment had eventually developed between the animal and owner.

Cattle Named After Countries and Places

Because many Zambians worked in Zimbabwean or South African mines as migrant labourers during colonial days – returning with interesting tales for children and grandchildren – the names Zimbabwe, Jubeki ('Johannesburg') and Wankie all recall sojourns in those places. Japan was bestowed because of the owner's view that it is the only country that produces genuine and durable machinery and equipment, and he wanted the strength and durability of such equipment to be manifested in his ox. Africa is quite common, and a source of pride in owners' identity as Africans. Germany, Botswana, Kenya and London were all mentioned as places owners said they loved and had so named their cattle for them.

Names Alluding to Breed, Appearance and Physical Features

Cattle fall into certain general categories. They are classified according to colour configuration, age, sex, size, reproductive state and completeness. Bulls are admired and extolled for beauty of form, strength and size, while cows are esteemed for reproductive records, and names reflect appreciation of these qualities. These names often arise as nicknames acquired later in life, inspired by the special characteristics or inclinations of the animals.

In the past Tonga kept only traditional breeds of cattle. Now, however, exotic breeds are being introduced through non-governmental organizations or governmental programmes seeking to increase the stock and quality of the cattle in the province. When 'strange' breeds were introduced it was not uncommon for cattle owners to identify the animals by their breeds: Dairy, English and Jersey.

Colour names, in either Chitonga or English, are an important descriptor for differentiating an animal from other stock in the kraal. Names derived from size and form also focus on the unusual characteristics of an animal as compared with others. These names may be derived from natural phenomena with specific symbolic values – for example, because farmers highly prize big and healthy animals, especially when it comes to draught cattle, Mountain, Elephant or Dundu ('big mountain') reflect this trait, as does a tall animal named Giraffe. And because most traditional cattle breeds are horned, stock without them may receive a name like Mukotoolo, the general term referring to all cattle without horns.

Names Based on Behavioural Characteristics

Names derived from behavioural characteristics of animals distinguish them on the basis of their individual peculiarities

of strength, resilience, temper, affection, obedience, stubbornness, etc. Apart from identifying the animals, these names remind the owners of the precautions to be employed when interacting with the cattle. Such names could be categorized as nicknames.

Champion, Tachooneki ('it is not possible to make it sleep') and Machine were found among animals that exhibited strength or were considered to be very hard-working. Rambo, derived from the film action hero, is sometimes given to oxen that display peculiar strength. An animal named Lawyer worked hard and listened to his owner's commands. Two others that followed instructions and were easy to train for draught power were christened Coach and Phone. These latter examples give glimpses into societal views with regard to certain professions.

On the other hand, of course, some animals display undesirable traits. Mpengele, which in Chitonga is a type of bean that hardly gets cooked no matter how long it stays on the fire, refers to a stubborn and difficult to control animal. The same might be given to an animal that breaks out of the kraal at night to raid maize fields. One animal named Soldier proved to be very rough with other animals. An animal that makes a lot of noise, especially when it has a calf, is Hachiyobeka ('that which makes a lot of noise'). Bulongo ('soil') is an animal that tends to overgraze at the expense of the soil.

Names Based on Religious Beliefs

Tongas as a rule are very religious. They have always practised some form of worship. In traditional Tonga society, there is a well-developed belief in the spirits of the ancestors called *mizimu*. At death each person leaves a spirit, a *muzimu*.

The *muzimu* commutes between the spirit world and the world of humans. Certain traditional religious practices invoke the spirits of the ancestors to intercede in times of crisis. For instance, when there is a drought, the Tonga people gather at the *Malende* shrine to pray for rain. The *Lwiindi* ceremony, an annual event when people gather at this shrine to pray for rain, has recently achieved much prominence. The shrine also serves as the venue of thanksgiving sacrifices to ancestors in times of good harvest. Names such as *Malende* ('miracle') and *Lwiindi* are therefore common among the cattle of the Tonga; similarly, Mary, Joseph and John reflect the many Tonga people that have been converted to Christianity. Such names serve to remind the people of their culture and religious beliefs.

Gender in Cattle Names

While some names of cattle can be given to any animal, some cattle names are gender specific, which is to say they are used exclusively for either cows or oxen and bulls. Most names based on qualities of strength and size tend to be given to oxen or bulls. Names that extol beauty are given to cows. In some instances, the gender differentiation is manifested in the structure of the name itself. As noted earlier, the prefix *muka-* ('wife of') is used with names for cows, while those for oxen or bulls are not prefixed in any form. In some cases these gender shades tend to be derogatory. For example, a cow that is not productive may be given a name such as *Nabutema* ('spinster') or *Ncembele* ('old one'). A cow that is lovely and friendly may be given the name *Kasimbi* ('small girl') even if it is not a calf.

Conclusion

This paper has looked at the names of cattle and the system of naming them among the Tonga people of Zambia. It has been shown that cattle are given names at any stage in their life by their owners or by any members of the family, especially the menfolk. Importantly, analysis of these names demonstrates that the naming of cattle closely approximates the system used for humans. Moreover, like personal names, the Tonga do not give cattle names at random; a lot of consideration goes into the choice of a name based upon deeply entrenched cultural values and experiences. By categorizing sources and meanings thematically, a reconstructed sense of Tonga culture comes to light, especially their social and economic environment, view of the world and the value they attach to cattle. From this analysis, it is possible to mine a wealth of information about Tonga society and their animals and conversely how changes in naming patterns reflect changes in wider society, modernity, global outlooks, national sport, African-wide political awareness, and so on.

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CHAPTER V

Demonizing the Migrant Labour System in the Context of Marriage: The Wealth in Folk Literature

John B. Siakavuba¹

Introduction

Folk literature contains wisdom and cultural heritage disguised in commonplace tales. Such stories can poignantly express tensions between tradition and change, acting as a reflection of people's attempts to make sense of their lives. This article examines labour migration and its effects on arranged marriages in the Valley Tonga region of Zambia by analysing *kwaana*, their storytelling tradition. In particular, two folktales collected in 1989 from the people of Chief Mweemba's area present interesting interpretations of the migrant labour system (Siakavuba 1989). Using ethnopoetics as a theoretical framework, such folktales can be explored as 'system[s] to frame and communicate meanings [and ...] interpret emotions and ideas' (Ben-Amos 1992: 116). The stories' imagery and symbolism is examined, focusing on material found in the stories themselves rather than standards extrinsic to a performance.

Among the Tonga residing in Chief Mweemba's area, the folktale is a useful tool for several reasons. Firstly, the folktale

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occupies a central place in their aesthetic repertoire (which includes riddles, proverbs, poetry and songs). While other expressive modes are moderated by age, the folktale is performed and enjoyed by all, a tradition unrestricted by age, gender, status or other restrictive factor. Any member of the community may tell or be the audience in a performance.

The folktale also incorporates other genres, giving it even greater cultural texture and depth. For example, it may include a song to supply background information to the conflict and characters or to foreshadow a major development (much like a Greek chorus). By using a song the folktale enhances the plot and commands audience participation as they sing along with the storyteller. Proverbs and riddles are employed when the storyteller is in direct conversation with the audience. If the narrator is middle age or older, it confirms the view that efficacy in proverb increases with age; whereas a younger narrator adds intrigue by punctuating narration with riddles at appropriate points in the unfolding drama of the tale.

Also, the folktale is not limited in length, which allows the conflict of the story to be developed into a truly dramatic portrayal. The individual performer has space to manipulate the basic storyline to convey individual attitudes about the common experience that the story highlights. Such narrative licence spices up a performance, making it unique from others; this is important because stories are the property of the entire community, not any one individual. Anyone is free, if able, to narrate it. As every performer has to make each one of his narrations the most memorable. However, this extends only to dramatization, vocal variety and the use of props. In terms of the core plot, theme and text, each folktale has a fixed design which the narrator cannot alter at will. The final realization reflects the performer's artistry and imagination within acceptable dimensions dictated by society.

Finally, communal ownership is evident in the story's content. Valley Tonga respond to socio-economic forces through their popular arts, often fictionalizing common experiences. Folk stories discuss social issues more didactically than music or proverbs do and have a wider impact. One only narrates a folktale to an audience. The role of the audience is integrative, not passive, as they become part of the actors. A successful performance is therefore highly interactive, which accentuates both the entertainment and educational value of the experience.

Marriage Patterns and Labour Migration Among the Valley Tonga

Historically marriage among the Valley Tonga could be placed into four patterns: arranged, forced, elopement and abduction. Colson states that the Valley Tonga 'formerly favoured infant betrothals and combined a system of working for one's bride with payment of bride wealth' (1960: 23). Where arranged marriage failed, any of the three other options prevailed as alternatives.

Among the Valley Tonga in Mweemba's area, marriage was considered effective from the date of betrothal until death, especially of the wife. A woman who lost her husband through death was not considered to have been abandoned or neglected, unlike married women who experienced indefinite absence of their husband. In both cases, husband replacement was the accepted course of action, often with mixed results. Colson (1960: 116) observed:

If the husband remains away for many years, his lineage will seek to maintain a hold upon his wife and household. A brother or kinsman will be appointed as pro husband to live with his wife, beget her children and head her household.

In the matrilineal tradition of these Tonga, the replacement for a husband was normally a brother or sister's son. A brother was considered a male relative born to one's mother or mother's sister and sister referred to a female relative born of one's mother or mother's sister.

In the case of death, the system of husband replacement was generally not resisted. Absence and replacement of a husband for other reasons, however, often provoked 'rebellion' in both women and men. Women did not accept being inherited by men who were typically already married, while men could not continue to inherit a relative's childhood betrothal. As a result, elopement, forced marriage or marriage by abduction were viewed as preferable options. Elopement was the most popular alternative because it offered a fresh opportunity to marry somebody one has chosen, though families did not initially support self-entered arrangements. However, once eloped, the marriage had to be formalized.

The major cause of absence of a husband other than death was wage labour, especially as characterized by the migrant labour system. Among the Tonga, labour migration was more a popular personal choice rather than a formalized feature of the economic system. It provided access to many things that individuals admired and desired, such as European clothes, plates, agricultural implements like the plough, and cash for taxes or bride wealth. Many families preferred for their able-bodied men to enter wage employment in Zimbabwe, South Africa or along the line of rail in Zambia in order to possess such items. Men left for varied durations. Some never returned to their villages.

In many places the shortage of men perpetuated food scarcity and poverty (Houghton 1952) but among Mweemba's people this was generally not a problem (Siamwiza 1993). However, because so many men joined the migrant labour force, the practice did have serious repercussions on the

economic activities and social organization of the Valley Tonga. With so many young and middle-aged men away from the villages, marriages were particularly affected, especially if absences proved indefinite. Colson explained that 'the upper river woman would await an absent husband for several years and then accept a pro husband of his lineage' (1960: 116).

Fictionalizing the Problem of Labour Migration

Such circumstances prompted protest against arranged marriage in the face of the migrant labour system among the Valley Tonga. One mode of protest was social commentary on individuals' responses to the practice. Songs were composed and sung praising successful migrant workers who returned bearing items of European culture, or castigating married women and girls suspected of entertaining freshly returned migrant workers in exchange for gifts. Songs urged young men to join the migrant labour force and encouraged women to be faithful while awaiting their husbands' return. These songs were performed at *kalilo*, the open arena dance event.

Protest in the form of popular songs dealt with the effects of labour migration on individuals, but failed to adequately address how the problem affected society or the broader community. They did not offer reliable solutions or even opinions on the practice, but tended to focus instead on labour migration's outcomes. In this regard, however, folktales filled the gap.

Two narratives first collected in 1989 provide primary material illustrating Tonga demonization of labour migration. The first, titled *Joncho Mulomo*, is the story of a young woman married to a husband she is not able to meet in person. After moving into her in-laws' home to await his return, she is advised to put all the maize bran she pounds into the

chimumbwa, or grain crib. As she does she sings boastfully about her husband who is away at Saba. Another voice wonders out loud who is at Saba as he – her husband – is in the *chimumbwa* enjoying the maize bran she prepared. Initially she does not hear the voice; when she finally does, the young wife insists on being returned to her parents' place.

After days of pleading with her mother-in-law, the trip to take the woman back to her parents is fixed. On the day of the journey her husband – in the shape of a long snake – slithers up into the trees while the wife walks on the ground. As she walks she sings a song in which she urges her husband to return her to her parents' home. The snake then replies with a question: what will he, the husband, be given for this service? The woman assures him that he will receive chickens, goats or even *ng'ombe* (cattle) – all important livestock in the local economy.

Upon arrival in the girl's home village, the snake is shown a hut to rest in, just as any in-law would be and a feast is prepared. The snake is entertained with a lot of beer until he gets drunk and retires to bed, leaving his hosts still feasting. As he slumbers, the villagers bar the entrance to his hut and set it on fire with the snake inside. He wakes up to find the hut burning and calls out in panic, pleading with his wife to rescue him, but all is in vain. At that point, the story ends.

The second folktale, *Nsangwa Lweelwe*, is also the story of a girl moved to her in-laws' place after marriage to a man she did not meet in person. Her mother-in-law instructs the girl to place a portion of each meal in the *gombwa* (a roof covering a number of grain bins or *tumumbwa*). She does this obediently. However, when she goes to collect the plates, she finds everything has been swallowed: food, plates, bowls, cups, all of it. To express her sadness, she sings a song expressing her disappointment with her predicament. She blames her mother for getting her into this mess (for giving birth to her and sending her on this path towards marriage).

This continues for a long while until the girl can bear it no more. She runs away and climbs up a tall tree. Her parents and in-laws take turns pleading with her in vain to come down. As they plead they sing and the girl sings back her refusals. Finally her baby brother persuades her to come down. When she does, everyone is happy but she refuses to return to her 'matrimonial' home and the story ends.

Protest and Demonization

Both of these folktales fictionalize experiences by women betrothed to men who have gone into labour migration. The system itself is personified by monsters to whom the women are married. The first wife's boastful song about Saba, an industrial centre, reinforces the view that it is about labour migration, and illustrates the excitement labour migration generated in people. But the young wife is not sensitive to the voice coming from the grain crib trying to correct her. When she grows tired of waiting for her husband, she finally hears his voice, which is the young woman's awakening to the reality of her situation: she is married to a monster. We hear only his voice for much of the tale, but when we finally meet him there is total commotion and intense panic as the monster-husband takes to the treetops. This underscores the view that labour migration had far-reaching and disruptive effects. It belonged to an alien culture. Wherever it exists, nothing will be normal.

In the second folktale we do not see the husband at all. All we are told is that his mother had a child who was *domba*, a half-snake, half-human creature with the queer eating habit of swallowing plates, pots, water basins and buckets. The family's eating habits (with plates, silverware) suggest the presence of items of European culture. This husband is

obviously a migrant worker, but his physical form, as a *domba*, suggests that he was destined for another world.

Additionally, both stories portray the monsters as antisocial. Even when there is opportunity to be among his *bakwasi* (in-laws), Joncho Mulomo remains indoors for most of the time, until the feast when he briefly appears and quickly retires back into the hut with the excuse that he is exhausted. Such characterization could be society's perception of migrant returnees who were considered to have come back with airs that made them uncomfortable in normal village life. It could also represent migrant workers' disappointment at the lack of change in their indigenous culture despite the vast transformations of the outside world experienced in the industrial centres where they had been working. Either way, the message is clear: both portrayals colour labour migration as a system that alienates migrants from their home culture.

Common to both tales is the involvement of larger society in resolving the women's respective ordeals. It is the whole community who schemes to burn the monster in the first story, and when he begs to be rescued, he sings alone, as if emphasizing the fact that he is unwanted. In the second tale, it requires many people to convince the wife to descend from the tree – again showing that the eradication of labour migration requires collective effort.

Imagery and symbolism offer further clues about the tales' morals and engage the audience in a game of filling in gaps of meaning and fictional detail. Just as importantly, they help to set the emotional tone of the performance. Artefacts of material culture are imbued with meaning: the presence of European items such as plates, pots and the like dramatize the strange habits of the husband and underscore labour migration's mean and foreign nature. Another example is in the significance of the grain crib, which features prominently in both tales. In the life of the Valley Tonga, the crib – a huge bottle-shaped

grain-storage bin made of clay – is a strong symbol of subsistence. Unlike *ntombo* (a stilt house also used for storing harvest), the crib stores shredded grain and is effectively fumigated to rid it of grain borer and weevils that may spoil the crop. A cluster of up to eight cribs each mounted on stone stands (*tumumbwa*) would be covered under one roof to constitute *gombwa*. With these there was assurance of at least some grain even in the face of intense hunger in the valley (Siamwiza 1993).

That the monster coils himself there raises concern. Is it replacing food grain and therefore present to kill people? A possible explanation is that labour migration, representing the Western cash economy, has come in to topple indigenous survival methods.

Also meaningful is the presence of narrative songs to enhance the plot. As popular dramatic devices, they give audience members the opportunity to feel with the characters and directly participate in a performance. Language in songs is poetic and consequently loaded with meaning. Archaic terminology such as *nsangwa* (in place of *mbede* for wooden or woven plate), *bbumbwa* (a large crib), *buvundu* (instead of *busenga* for bran), *mpali* (instead of *kapali* for a clay pot used for drinking water or beer) brings out the rich nature of the indigenous language that is – quite tellingly – almost dying away in the face of modernization influences.

By demonizing a globalized practice like labour migration, the Valley Tonga were expressing their rejection of a system that was economically addictive. *Domba* are associated with sorcerers and killing such creatures results in the death of the witch (owner of the *domba*). Concluding the story by setting fire to Joncho Mulomo is prescribing a symbolic death to labour migration. *Nsangwa Lweelwe*, likewise, offers a direct appeal to the young to avoid the seductions of labour migration at the expense of their indigenous cultural integrity.

Alternatively, these narratives can also be seen as an appeal for society to accommodate change, because in a world of labour migration, arranged marriage no longer works. Women are the usual victims when forced marriage is imposed. In *Joncho Mulomo*, after the young wife discovers the snake in the crib, the dramatic irony of the situation raises audience emotion against the mother – who represents conservative older generations – for continuing to hide the truth she does not realize has already been exposed. Community elders are insisting on a practice that can no longer work and the young woman's desire for a husband of her choice who will be present for her is completely ignored.

Conclusion

Kwaana is a poignant reservoir of Tonga cultural heritage and a wealth of insight into societal responses to issues that matter to them – in this case, tensions about industrialization and change. Critical ethnopoetic analysis belies views that such stories as mere entertainment; as a tool for framing a common experience, folktales mount a powerful argument, appealing to the emotions and shared understanding of the listening audience. These two tales reflect conflicting ideas about the migrant labour system as at once enticing and desirable yet a recognized threat to marriage and, by extension, other foundations of 'traditional' society. This research presents but a tip of what Valley Tonga folk literature can offer to an inquisitive scholar.

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CHAPTER VI

The Gwembe Tonga Craft World and Development Intervention

Gijsbert Witkamp¹

Abstract

This text is about the impact of four craft development projects in the Gwembe Valley on the Gwembe Tonga crafts world during 1980 to 2000. The interventions extended the Gwembe Tonga crafts world beyond the boundaries of Gwembe Tonga life to the national and international crafts business. The projects economically and culturally sustained, expanded and enriched that world; they did so, ironically, by the introduction of exotic projects, which (still) are alien to indigenous socio-economic organization. In particular, the three donor-aided projects created a disjointed Gwembe Tonga crafts world, that is, a crafts world populated by parties which lack mutual understanding and stable, durable relationships. Participation of crafts makers in governance was obstructed by lack of a corresponding indigenous organization that could provide a model for such participation, by conflicting interests of

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dominating local elite, unfamiliarity on the part of crafts makers with the kind of organization a development project is, and sometimes sheer lack of interest.

Introduction

The rupture in the life of the Gwembe Tonga imposed on them by the construction of the Kariba Dam at the end of the 1950s also greatly affected their crafts world. British colonial rule, established at the beginning of the twentieth century, had not radically altered the Gwembe Tonga way of life. The Gwembe Valley was isolated, poorly accessible, unhealthy for Europeans and of little economic value at the time. In the 1950s it was realized that the Zambezi River, quite literally the artery of Gwembe Tonga society, could be tapped to feed the energy requirements of Southern and Northern Rhodesian towns and mining industries. The area was opened up by the construction of roads, the colonial administration became a permanent rather than an incidental presence, and schemes were put in motion to enforce resettlement of some 57,000 people. The hydroelectric Kariba Dam flooded the Gwembe Tonga into modernity. The natural resources of the valley no longer primarily served the Gwembe Tonga, but national and international economies. The incorporation of the Gwembe Tonga into the modern world subjected them to political and economic interests over which they had very little control, a situation which also prevailed after independence of the former Rhodesias in 1964 (Zambia) and 1980 (Zimbabwe).

Government, NGOs, churches and development agencies moved in to bring what they perceived to be development for the Gwembe Tonga. One result of these extraneous concerns has been the establishment of several crafts projects as of the early 1970s. Four such projects came into existence, two in

Zambia and two in Zimbabwe. The economic, social and cultural impact of these interventions on the Gwembe Tonga crafts world has been considerable. The projects introduced commercial crafts production, marketing by a specialized agency largely for external markets, professional association and training, increased exposure to regional and exotic crafts, and disseminated aesthetic concepts of the foreign marketplace rather than those grounded in locally defined function. They also confronted the crafts makers with the vicissitudes of international development assistance and of national and international markets.

All projects were primarily established to contribute to poverty alleviation for the Gwembe Tonga subsistence and peasant farmers by opening up an avenue for supplementary income generation through crafts making. The Gwembe Tonga are amongst the poorest populations both in Zambia and Zimbabwe. Commercial crafts production was to facilitate participation in a monetary economy on which the Gwembe Tonga have become dependent. The crafts are exported out of the Valley in return for cash, and the cash is largely used to pay for imported commercial commodities and modern services. The commercial production of crafts, ironically, builds upon a tradition, the products of which are often less valued today by the Gwembe Tonga than the industrial commodities which, to some extent, have come to replace them.

The crafts projects typically fulfil an intermediary role between indigenous production and an exotic market; between sponsoring development agencies and crafts makers; and, by extension, between the Gwembe Tonga and the world at large. They are agents of change, linking and extending a crafts world beyond the boundaries of Gwembe Tonga life to the national and international crafts business within a framework of 'development'. Today Gwembe Tonga crafts may be purchased

in shops within the Southern African region, in Western Europe, the United States and Japan. The parties that form the Gwembe Tonga crafts world are no longer exclusively local artisans and users, but now include exotic crafts projects, craft shops, customers buying from these shops and international bodies promoting 'crafts development'.

The successes and failures of the crafts projects in a number of ways are indicative of the difficulties confronting the Gwembe Tonga in the transformation from a relatively self-sufficient existence to a life which demands them to adequately deal with larger and more powerful economic, political and cultural realities. They are also indicative of some problems of the development industry.

One of the changes brought about by the crafts-development projects is the use of terms such as 'crafts', 'crafts makers' and 'crafts world' to describe and classify an aspect of Gwembe Tonga life in the English language. The Gwembe Tonga do not have a word for the English 'crafts' or 'crafts maker' and do not think of their 'crafts' as situated in a 'crafts world'. It makes sense, however, to talk about the 'Gwembe Tonga crafts world', as there is a practical reality to which the term may be applied. The term crafts world refers to such a reality as a structured, more or less coherent social, economic and cultural domain (see for example Becker (1984) for the related sociological concept of 'art world'). This text is about the transformation of a crafts world once primarily diffused into the practicalities of daily life into an emerging distinct domain.

The Tradition

In order to understand the impact of development projects on the Gwembe Tonga crafts world we have to understand how that world was constructed prior to the appearance of these

projects on the scene as of the 1970s. That world, despite its apparent heterogeneity and local variations, is informed by underlying rules and conditions. These govern the technologies, the division of labour in production and use, the modes of economic exchange, the transfer of skills, the contexts in which the artefacts are used and the meanings attached to them.

This historical crafts world enabled and enables certain innovations and inhibits others. Today, certain 'traditional' parameters prevail practically as dominant tendencies and culturally as normative rules and values; others have been supplemented or replaced by what have become accepted practices of fairly recent introduction. Many *budima* drums (used by village drum teams) presently, for example, are painted in commercially available colours. The colours used are often of paints incidentally at hand. The 'traditional' colours are white (chalk), black (charred and crushed *musikili* seeds) and red (red oxide of iron). Ironically many of the 'purely' decorated drums today are made for an external market, the customers of which enjoy their 'authenticity', while in the Tonga villages many *budima* drums happily signify the successful penetration of an industrial product – canned paint. 'Tradition' allowed the Gwembe Tonga women to replace a clay pot for a plastic bucket, but inhibits men from practising the female art of pottery save for their customary production of male pipe heads. Shopping baskets, a fairly new product, are made by an old weaving technology employed in making storage baskets. In this case the rules of the game have been applied in an innovative manner, but the technology has not been altered. Glass beads were introduced centuries ago by traders from the east coast. They became major objects of value and prestige. A second and quite spectacular development occurred more recently when a whole repertory of new beadwork objects became most of the Gwembe Tonga official dress. This fine beadwork is an outcome of Tonga–Ndebele

interaction. Some beadwork probably replaced bodily decorations made of indigenous materials such as the seeds of certain trees. There is therefore both continuity and change.

Changes in the craft tradition are restrained or enabled by prevailing routines, rules, knowledge, conceptions and conditions. Successful development intervention depends on the compatibility of the way of doing things by development agencies and of a population earmarked for 'development'. Some aspects of the traditional crafts world relevant to the success of development intervention are briefly described below.

The things we now label crafts are a selection of objects that are placed in the larger context of the Gwembe Tonga material world: a world which was, and to a considerable degree still is, largely of their own making. The homestead was a highly self-sufficient unit based on subsistence farming supplemented by hunting, gathering and fishing. The domestic production of objects mostly for own use fits a way of life stressing the economic independence of the homestead. All Gwembe Tonga men and women in varying degrees made and make the things that they need, and in this sense all Gwembe Tonga are craftsmen and women. People still build their own huts, weave baskets, fire pots, construct sledges and carve stools.

They make utilitarian and decorative objects, ritual or 'magical' artefacts and musical instruments. Many decorative objects are made of beads and these show a concern with aesthetics through patterning and shape. The beadwork, worn on the body, often combines ornamental and aesthetic functions with spiritual significance and social prestige. Certain artefacts were used in religious practice, in witchcraft and in sorcery: they constitute the paraphernalia of healers, diviners and other spiritual leaders. Some objects gained special status by being associated with spirit 'inheritance' – a person inheriting the spirit of a deceased relative keeps an object intimately associated with the deceased. The *zim pangaliko zya*

mizimu, things of the ancestral spirits, were the tangible proof of having such spiritual association. Such 'heirlooms' had to be durable and transportable in order to be taken to gatherings of the living where the presence of the ancestral spirits was required. Musical instruments, drums, flutes, rattles, the thumb piano and the bow are elements of the most important domain of Gwembe Tonga artistic expression: music, dance and song, both in ritual and secular contexts.

Production, Distribution and Appreciation

It was recognized that some people had better skills than others in the production of material goods. The *basilunamba*, the ones who have perseverance, obtained a reputation as specialists. Such people were (and often still are) considered to be gifted by the association of the spirit of a deceased skilled crafts maker to him or her. Typically a person would fall sick and upon divination it would be diagnosed that the spirit of a deceased crafts maker was seeking to enter the person, thus causing the illness (Colson 1960: 133, 144–6, 1971: 210, 217). The Gwembe Tonga recognized the spiritual nature of art in their own way. They also recognized, as implied by the term *basilunamba*, that the mastering of a craft required persistent effort and had to be learned. Certain crafts were not generally practised and this applied in particular to pottery, smithing and canoe making. These extraordinary crafts men or women were also spiritually endowed (Colson 1971: 217). Some artefacts were restricted in circulation such as the paraphernalia of witchcraft, healing and divination. Such objects were usually made by the practitioner but might incidentally be obtained by commissioning a person of greater ability.

The specialists, like their fellow Gwembe Tonga are subsistence farmers in the first place. They would, however,

from time to time, be engaged in economic transactions in which their products were exchanged for other goods. Such barter was restricted to the immediate vicinity of the producer (Colson 1960: 35, 37). The buyer usually approached the producer, unless the producer went around to look for food in exchange for the crafted object (Colson, personal communication). Only as of the 1950s did economic exchange take the form of a monetary transaction, but even today barter is not uncommon. The sale of crafts by a middleman was not practised – transactions were carried out directly between producer and customer.

Gwembe Tonga artefacts were not involved in extensive internal or external economic exchanges. Natural resources for crafts production were distributed in various places of the Valley. No local, unique technologies emerged, though particular crafts were more developed or practised in certain areas. The tendency towards economic self-sufficiency of the homestead and a concomitant low level of specialization inhibited the development of a significant internal trade. Low population density and the sheer dangers and effort of travel and transport must have been other negative factors. Crafts production was also limited by the absence of a system which put a premium on material culture in order to articulate differences in status or in which excellence in the production of crafts led to significant economic or social rewards (Reynolds 1968). Neither do the Gwembe Tonga have rituals or ceremonies that call for elaborate objective choreography. Gwembe Tonga material culture is generally simple and the production of an extensive range of material goods is certainly not a major project to them. Surplus wealth tends to be reinvested productively, that is, in wives, cattle, medicines (Colson 1971: 158) or a plough, and occasionally in a bicycle, radio, blankets, roofing sheets and other objects associated with modern life. The body adornments, the beadwork, the *impande* necklace, the *kauri* head pads, and the brass or iron bangles were prestige

goods. Ownership of these prized (and truly costly) exotic objects was, however, not exclusively limited to a special class or group, save for the gender bound use of these objects. Many Gwembe Tonga have a limited tolerance towards private differentiation in wealth and have developed an extensive apparatus to ensure that individual wealth is redistributed into the family and community. Finally, the remoteness of the area negatively affected the prospects of external trade. We know that some trade has been going on – in slaves, ivory and tobacco for cloth, beads and guns – and while such incidental trade did have considerable local impact it surely did not provide the Gwembe Tonga with the range of skills and attitudes associated with entrepreneurial society.

Crafts production was carried out individually at the homestead. Little of it was taken up in trade or exchange systems and most of it served practical domestic needs. Professional association was unknown, and transfer of skills informal and ad hoc. A child would see her grandmother make a pot and copy her labour.

Criteria for the appreciation of crafts centred on functionality and effectiveness: a well-made stool was a stool that lasted. Crafts therefore tended to be sturdy. A properly made witchcraft item or object used in divination was an object that worked. A good drum lasted and produced a good sound. A proper basket was a basket that did not leak the flour put into it. Many utilitarian and decorative objects, however, show a concern with form that exceeds functional requirements. The aesthetic appreciation of an object just for the sake of its visible beauty clearly informed the production of beadwork, but is also evident in pottery, basketry, stool and drum making.

Crafts, except for clay figurines often made by children, were rarely vehicles of representative imagery, though certain objects could take on symbolic and ritual meaning or function. The Gwembe Tonga did not create a range of objects which

met Western conceptions about 'African art' or which could be easily appreciated by Western aesthetics. Barrie Reynolds (1968: 91–92), the author of the only monograph about Gwembe Tonga material culture, speaks of:

... the poverty of the material culture of the Valley Tonga [in which] the emphasis is always on function rather than form. Products, though clumsy and crude, are sturdy and satisfactory for the purpose for which they are intended. Graceful lines are rarely to be seen; decoration, if applied, is geometrical, careless and dull; colours are too boldly used and the effect is usually garish. The only exception to these criticisms is the pottery.

Today, while acknowledging the merits of his research, we accept his harsh judgement as being based on a personal interpretation of Western aesthetics. Western aesthetics are neither universal nor one of a kind and there is no reason to elevate Reynolds' preferences to a universal aesthetic standard. A genuine appreciation of Gwembe Tonga artefacts requires an understanding of the environment in which these objects are made and used. It also requires exposure and familiarity. It may then be that these 'crudely made objects' are felt to be charming by reflecting improvisation, spontaneity, craftsmanship and a straightforward relationship between raw material, end product and functional destiny. These aspects render the 'Gwembe Tonga crafts' a down-to-earth quality which stands in sharp contrast to much of the present Western applied arts.

Categories and Classification

The Gwembe Tonga did not have a socio-cultural domain they labelled crafts. Until recently terms like 'crafts', 'crafts making'

and 'crafts maker' had no meaning for the Gwembe Tonga. There were and are no Chitonga equivalents for these words. A consideration of Chitonga crafts-related terminology and classification helps us to understand 'crafts' in the context of Tonga culture and practice. We shall briefly consider the relationship between classifications based on technology and the gender-bound production of material goods.

The closest Tonga concept for the English 'crafts' is *zim pangaliko*, meaning things made by man. The verb *ku-panga* is to make. *Zim pangaliko* in English could be taken to mean 'artefacts', or 'objects of material culture' if the term material culture is used in a broad sense. *Zim pangaliko* is used as opposed to *zilenge*. *Zilenge* are all things found in nature, that is, things made by Chilenge, the Creator or God. The making of an artefact, *ku-panga*, is to transform a natural thing into a cultural product by human action. Artisans, aided by the spirits of their predecessors, are quite literally the producers and reproducers of material culture.

In Chitonga a number of named categories are subsumed under *zim pangaliko*, which in English label various kinds of crafts. The names of these categories are based on the raw material, its properties or the technique of making a finished product, and therefore correspond to a technological order also current in the Western crafts world.

The main technologically defined categories are woodwork, metalwork, pottery, fibre work and beadwork, that is, techniques and associated artefacts which were basic to the development of human culture. Woodwork in Chitonga is *bubezi*, 'things carved', and is derived from *kubeza*, which is to carve. Metalwork is *butale*, which literally means 'things hard and strong'. The related verb is *kutale*: to be strong. Pottery is *bubumbi*, from *kubumba*, which is to mould or model. Fibre work is quite a general term, which in this context embraces techniques such as weaving, cordage, plaiting and wickerwork. The Chitonga

approximation is *buluke*, 'things woven or plaited', and these include basketry, mats and bracelets or 'necklaces' made of grass. *Buluke* is related to the verb *kuluka*, which means weaving and apparently also captures plaiting (as of grass bangles). Beadwork is *bulungu*. The noun is probably related to the verb *kulungula*, meaning 'to twist' (that is, to twist the baobab fibre to thread) and to thread (of the beads on to a string); and to the verb *kulunga* which means 'to pay for a case'. Certain payments of fines used to be made with beads.

Most categories are composed of several named subcategories, and each (sub)category has a number of specimens. Spears, *masuma*, are a subcategory of *butale*, 'iron things', and are differentiated into fishing spears (*ing'umba*), hunting spears (*isumu*) and harpoons (*coowe*).

Many objects combine several techniques and materials. The fibre skirt, or *insete*, is made of *musante* strings (of the roots of the *musante* tree) adorned with beadwork. Objects are often decorated by applying colour (chalk or lime, ground iron oxide, and graphite or charred *musikili* seeds), by incision (pottery, woodwork), by charring (woodwork) or by dyeing (basketry and other fibre work).

In some cases the mixed media aspect precludes a straightforward technological classification: female pipes are made of a gourd with a clay pipe head and are often decorated with beads or other materials, the bowstring (a musical instrument) is made of a gourd acting as a resonator, a bent stick and (presently) metal wire. The Tonga, unlike the art historians, do not operate the concept 'mixed media'. From their point of view such objects are more readily classified according to purpose, function or domain of use. The indigenous classification of 'crafts' purely by technique does not therefore comprehensively cover all objects, but certainly a large number of them. Neither is the technological classification exclusive of other modes of ordering.

The classification of Gwembe Tonga crafts by raw material or by method of working the raw material makes vital sense in Gwembe Tonga material culture because of a socio-economic-ideological praxis in which the production of goods is almost fully gender bound. The production of crafts was and is structured by a division of labour in which specific technologies are almost exclusively allocated to either men or women. Men work in wood and iron, women work clay, fibre and beads. Incidentally men and women use the same material resource, but rarely to produce identical objects. Both men and women make reed sleeping mats (*malo*) and floor mats (*masasa*). Men make clay pipe bowls (*intale*), but these are different in shape from the female pipe heads. The female pipe head is called the *mwana wa ncelwa*, or child of the gourd of which the female bubble pipe is made. Women make storage baskets but men make the fishing baskets or scoops used by women in fishing (Colson, personal communication). The case of beadwork is more complicated and requires further research. Today beadwork is made by women. The author's main informant (Mr Syabbalo, see Notes) said, however, that in the past men also made beadwork and taught their wives the techniques and models they had found in Bulawayo as migrant labourers.

Above are outlined some basic aspects of Gwembe Tonga 'traditional' crafts which bear upon the issue of crafts development. These crafts are embedded in a crafts world which includes not only the artefacts, but also their production, use, the relationships between producers and users, the transference of skills, ideas and values associated to these objects, their place in explicit economical practice and implicit ideological conception. This crafts world is embedded in the larger context of Gwembe Tonga life. The following section will detail how this world was acted upon by external agencies of change concerned with crafts development.

The Interventions: Four Crafts-Development Projects in Gwembe Valley (1980–2000)

Today a discussion of the Gwembe Tonga crafts world has to address the role of crafts-development projects as these have significantly altered that crafts world since the early 1970s. Hundreds of crafts makers in Zambia and in Zimbabwe are (or were) affiliated to these ventures. The projects market most of the commercial crafts production of the Valley. The discussion below focuses on the period 1980–2000. The ethnographic present is used even though the thing presented may no longer exist.

The four Gwembe Valley crafts projects have in common that they have primarily been designed to provide income for a poor farming population living in an area with insufficient arable land and erratic rainfall (Scudder 1962). The projects stress sensible economic strategies through spreading of risks by diversification of activities and (better) utilization of local natural and human resources. Other concerns (skill development, natural resource management, the appreciation of crafts as an element of culture, and preservation of traditional skills and knowledge) were secondary to the clearly economic purpose of creating a source of cash income for subsistence or small peasant farmers.

The Projects

The first development venture into Gwembe Tonga crafts was by the German Gossner Mission which, as of 1972, ran an operation known as 'Tonga Crafts'. It was based in Gwembe South (now called the Sinazongwe district) of the Zambian Gwembe Valley. Crafts were purchased and sold in the Siabaswi area and at the Gossner Mission Office at Lusaka mostly to

Europeans stationed in the national capital. Initially quite successful, it ran into deep waters by the early 1980s. It lacked professional management and the readily marketable 'authentic' (used) crafts had been depleted.

In 1988 'Tonga Crafts' was adopted by Dutch agencies as a development project named the Gwembe Valley Tonga Museum and Crafts Project. Consequent to conditional donor funding the venture developed from a local activity into a regional project, having its headquarters in the neighbouring Choma district on the plateau. The financial donor rightly reasoned that the Gwembe Valley was too remote to viably sustain the project. The crafts activities in Gwembe Valley, while a major concern (at that time), became part of a much larger package. The organization was formally restructured in 1995 and renamed the Choma Museum and Crafts Centre Trust Ltd (CMCC). The project was designed as a combined museum and crafts project having cultural and economic objectives related by a common concern with material culture. It has received a longer period of continuous support by a single donor than any of the other donor-funded crafts projects.

The crafts activities commenced in 1989 in Gwembe South by the provision of economic stimulants (buying crafts) and the creation of an organization. An intake system was established. Crafts were bought monthly or bi-monthly at various locations: Sinazeze, Lusinga, Siabaswi and Kafwambila. Permanently staffed stations were opened at Sinazeze (1989) and Siabaswi (1993). During the buying sessions quality aspects were discussed with the producers, stressing indigenous notions of craftsmanship and external marketing requirements. This approach succeeded in creating regular production and better quality, but failed to generate productive levels of marketable crafts sufficient to make the operation cost covering and render substantial economic benefit to a large group of producers. By 1995 two hundred Gwembe Valley crafts

makers were associated to the CMCC, mostly making baskets, drums, stools and pots. The organization at the onset lacked professional staff for marketing and crafts development. The situation improved only in 1995 when a competent Zambian crafts development officer could be recruited.

The CMCC crafts activities have benefited from their association with the museum. The combination of museum and crafts makes the CMCC an attractive place to visit and this promotes sales of crafts. Several workshops for artisans took place in conjunction with museum activities.

Natural resource management was initiated in 1993 by the cultivation of the *malala* (palm species, the *Hyphaene petersiana*) in a pilot scheme and the subsequent promotion of its cultivation at individually owned gardens. Its leaves are used in basketry. To date, several hundreds of seedlings have grown into harvestable trees.

The operations persistently faced three main problems. The first was lack of a readily marketable craft. The second was the cost of operations, especially of transport. This placed a major restraint on purchasing, training and field visits. The third complicating factor was the general economic decline, which, as of 1993, negatively affected wholesale of crafts to Zambian businesses.

The second Zambian Gwembe Tonga crafts activity is based in Munyumbwe and was initiated by an Irish Catholic sister in the early 1990s. Sister Andrea felt pity for the poverty of the Munyumbwe women and started buying and selling their baskets. On her departure the activity was fully incorporated into the Monze Home Crafts Centre, which is part of the extensive Roman Catholic establishment that has its headquarters in that district capital. Munyumbwe, in the neighbouring Gwembe district, gradually developed into a prominent centre of basketry in Southern Province. It never received a great deal of outside support. Assistance initially

was limited to the Catholic Church, which took care of the sister and her transport. The Church offers the Monze Home Crafts Centre modest accommodation and contributes to the upkeep of its principal. Monze Home Crafts Centre is a simple, low-cost operation. It occasionally organizes workshops and more or less regularly buys baskets. The Munyumbwe women, about two hundred of them, are, however, well organized in producers' clubs. Over the years the quality of the unique baskets has improved from poor to good and sometimes very good. Presently they have a reasonably stable and substantial export market, purchases in the first half of 1996 being in the order of US\$3000. Munyumbwe is a remarkable example of what dedication can achieve. Its very simplicity is another asset. Each participating crafts maker understands what is going on and there are no interested parties outside the producers and the Monze Home Crafts Centre involved in the activity.

Both Zimbabwean projects are or have been closely affiliated with district councils and thus linked to the government structure. The advantages of this were that the projects had a clearly defined status and that their establishment was supported by government. The councils, furthermore, took care of administrative matters, thus reducing the workload of project personnel. The same construction, however, created rather common problems once the projects were well established.

The Binga Crafts Centre became fully operational in 1990. It has been established with Danish technical support (by DVS, now called MS). Funding has come from various parties, of which Danida has been the most prominent. The Omay Crafts Centre opened in 1988, was established with Dutch technical assistance (SNV) and has received financial support from various quarters. The donor-supported development trajectory of both projects is highly impressive. Three major reasons

account for this remarkable record: good personnel, good programmes and a ready market. Both centres were blessed during their establishment stage with exceptionally competent development workers who had a good rapport with the producers, were accepted by the communities in which they worked, understood crafts, were able to provide effective training, had business sense, were hard working and dedicated to the success of the projects entrusted to them. Both worked for prolonged periods of time rather than the standard three-year contract. They gained the necessary familiarity with the environment and were in a position to build up indispensable personal and institutional networks. The projects started out with a clear and limited focus on crafts development and crafts development only. Omay developed a modest museum activity, but only after the crafts programme had been well established. Omay and Binga, unlike the Zambian projects, developed training programmes from the very beginning of their operations. Binga in particular created an adequate productive base with 1500 affiliated crafts makers in 1992 and a membership of over three thousand artisans in 1996. Binga has the added advantage of having a local craft, which, almost from the start, had very good marketing prospects. The Binga *isangwa* has a particular fineness of weave and appearance that appeals to Western aesthetics. The basket is bought because of its beauty and not because of its practical utility or presumed authenticity. Omay, lacking a marketable specialization, developed a broad range of products including some non-traditional local crafts (carvings, textile work). The rapid growth of the projects was greatly aided by a very well developed tourist industry and a national handicrafts centre which promotes and exports crafts.

At Binga, the *malala* palm leaves became a scarce commodity as a result of the incredible increase in basket production. Wrangles over harvesting rights of the wild tree emerged. Attempts to address the situation materialized only in 1996

when about three thousand seedlings were planted. It took Omay seven years and Binga five years to become established, after several years of preliminary work. Both projects constructed attractive accommodation, training programmes and the organization of producers was put into place. The business became more or less cost covering and Zimbabwean successors were identified and trained according to the counterpart system.

Did the Projects Work?

All projects show that real and economically sustainable development in Gwembe Tonga crafts can be achieved under conditions of good management. Yet direct financial benefits for the producers have been modest. Many crafts makers make crafts because they lack a more rewarding economic activity. Average income for a skilled regular part-time producer under optimum conditions is in the order of ten to fifteen US dollars a month, with women's wages at the lower end of the scale. The majority of producers make less. Most participating artisans are women, probably indicating that women have a smaller range of options to earn cash income than men. Men tend to make the more expensive items such as drums, thus making more money than women in equal time.

The relationship between the projects and the crafts makers varied in the four cases and these relationships themselves changed in time. Crafts makers relate easiest to the projects as buying agencies and as vehicles for training. The procedures followed in the purchase of crafts are, by and large, understandable and accepted. The prices of items are fixed by size, and selection in buying is by quality preference of the buyer and to some extent by the presence or absence of an existing relationship. The differential pricing of crafts by quality is incidentally practised and at times disputed. Size

provides a tangible measure while quality assessment may be subject to manipulation. The crafts makers know that the projects have to market their products, as they themselves are unable to do so. They may have difficulties in comprehending or accepting that trading costs money and may suspect the projects of exploitation. Such suspicions are fed by the relatively low returns crafts production yields and the ever-increasing need for more cash. The transaction itself, however, is clear and accepted by both parties, provided payments are made immediately and the transaction is directly between project buyer and producer. Sales via middlemen ('group representatives') are resented. Either party in direct trade may accept or reject, though crafts makers are usually in the weaker position due to lack of alternative buyers.

Workshops and training sessions, provided they are given by a suitable instructor, meet enthusiastic response. Both economic and social interests appeal strongly to the crafts makers. People from various villages are brought together, meet each other and socialize. The workshops focus on the technical and aesthetic improvement of the crafts and create the link between producers and the requirements of the exotic market. The workshops also help to associate the crafts makers with the institutions and to create a sense of professionalism.

None of the projects introduced or imposed wholly new technologies; neither did they interfere with the existing gender-bound division of labour. All projects therefore adopted a strategy of limited productive innovation and this is certainly a major reason why crafts makers tended to respond well to them.

The participation of crafts makers in management and governance has been addressed differently by the various projects. At Munyumbwe the issue was irrelevant as the activity is not governed by a board or sponsored by a donor that insists on 'community participation' at that level. The

issue did matter, however, to the projects supported by development agencies. Initially the interests of crafts makers associated with the CMCC were to be looked after by founding board members. These community leaders – none of them crafts makers – in practice were more interested in the museum than in the crafts programme. In 1995 the crafts makers were requested to elect two representatives to become board members. They elected two non-crafts makers. Binga, until its restructuring in 1995, had two crafts producers on its board but they were not party to the big people who effectively controlled it. In addition, Binga had an advisory committee where executive management and crafts producers discussed the daily running of the Centre. The board, however, had the final say. Omay was managed by a management team under final authority of the district council.

Weaknesses

In all three donor-sponsored projects the Gwembe Tonga crafts makers had little say in policy and governance, particularly after the withdrawal of the expatriate development workers, who, in practice, were their most effective and dedicated representatives. Producers were organized, but the organization centred on training and production rather than on participation in governance.

The issue of producers' representation was complicated by the absence of a corresponding indigenous mode of governance. Unfamiliarity and lack of education made it near impossible for crafts makers to function as proper board members. Crafts makers in this regard were no match for local big shots. These factors resulted in poor, if any, effective direct participation in governing matters by the target group for whom the projects had been specifically established.

All three donor-sponsored projects experienced problems in management and governance. The CMCC, established in 1987 as a Gwembe Valley-dominated society, had a serious crisis in governance in 1994 when the founding board had to make way for a new board. Part of the crisis was caused by the scaling up of the project from a local Gwembe Tonga setting to a culturally plural regional venture. Another problem was the ambivalent issue of project ownership and control. Was it owned by the board or by the development agency?

At Binga problems in governance date back to 1990 when it had become evident that the project was going to be successful. The project became a battleground for conflicting interests in which the developing agency defended what it saw to be the interests of the producers against local big men who promoted interests of their own. The Danish Volunteer Service (DVS, now MS) pulled out of Binga in 1992 only to return in 1995, when the Binga Crafts Centre had been run down.

The Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) withdrew from Omay in 1993 as it felt that Omay could and should now stand on its own. Unlike Binga, the relationship between project and district council had been free of serious conflicts, though also in Omay the desirability of district council or political control over the Centre was questioned.

The termination of donor support created problems for both Zimbabwean projects in governance and management. The councils, in both cases, became claimants on the resources of the projects, perhaps considering these claims justified due to the assistance they had rendered. The Omay Crafts Centre lost its donor-given vehicle, which was crashed when commandeered by the Nyaminyami district council. The Binga district council expected revenue of the apparently booming Centre to be directed to its own financial needs rather than those of the producers. Politicians conceived of the Centre as

a way to gain political footage. Council claims could not be countered as the withdrawal of the development agency placed the councils in a controlling position. Omay suffered a loss in drive and quality. The decline of the Zimbabwean economy and tourist industry eventually spelled its doom.

The Development Agencies

The projects made perfect sense to the development agencies that supported them. The Gwembe Tonga are a deprived people, the intended beneficiaries poor, the projects tied in with an existing productive activity, the crafts makers would be provided with an avenue to badly needed cash, traditional skills and knowledge would be preserved and, last but not least, the operations were envisaged to become cost covering within a fairly short timespan. The projects, once established, were to be handed over to parties, which in a similarly devoted manner were to carry on serving the poor crafts makers. The interest of the producers was to be guaranteed by their participation in the decision-making instruments attached to these projects, or otherwise by community leaders who would ensure that the intended beneficiaries indeed benefited as they should.

It is clear that the development agencies only partially understood what they were getting into. For the Gwembe Tonga crafts makers most things these agencies did or intended to do had no familiar quality, no matter how consistent the package. In fact, as described above, the donor projects introduced a great many structural changes in the Gwembe Tonga crafts world.

The development agencies underestimated the problems inherent in the institutional setup and the associated difficulties of proper governance. They also underestimated the difficulty of identifying, recruiting, training and employing competent indigenous staff, especially in Zambia. Finally, the development

agencies, certainly in Omay and Choma, greatly overrated the short-term economic potential of craft production and marketing, a matter which directly affected the economic base of the projects themselves.

The development agencies have generously supplied the projects with the material, logistical, institutional and technical support they require. As a result, each of these projects has economically achieved what it set out to do, sometimes in quite a spectacular fashion given the prevailing circumstances. It turned out, however, that the main problems facing these economically defined crafts projects were of a non-economical nature.

The real problems are ultimately of an ideological nature. Remarkably, the very development perspective of the development agencies caused fundamental problems in management, governance and organization. Projects had to be handed over to bodies which had not invested in them, counterparts had to be appointed in the absence of competent and dedicated candidates, and representational and participatory structures had to be established in an environment that played the game by rules quite different from those of the sponsoring bodies. None of these projects was adequately embedded in local society. In that regard Munyumbwe stands out as a remarkable exception. Its development agenda is restricted to the production of quality crafts, the participation of the crafts makers is limited to economic transaction and skill development, and there are no parties claiming control, authority or ownership over the venture apart from the body that actually established it.

Conclusion

The interventions brought about major, innovative changes in the Gwembe Tonga crafts world. All projects started out as

exotic organizations, as they were not an outcome of a model of Gwembe Tonga socio-economic formation. They introduced commercial production for an external market, village-based organization, cooperation and training. The organizational activities supported professional association and enhanced the emerging economic and social status of 'crafts maker'. The category 'crafts' has come into being, in Chitonga also often called crafts, which crosscuts through the indigenous classification based on raw material or technology but is less broad than the generic *zimpangaliko*, 'things made by man'. An economically, socially and culturally defined crafts domain is emerging in Gwembe Tonga life.

The projects economically and culturally have been successful as their way of operation is and has been compatible with conditions prevailing prior to the interventions. The shift in economic transaction from barter to monetary transaction has been readily accepted and facilitated the participation of the Gwembe Tonga in a monetary economy on which they had become dependent. The role of the projects as 'middlemen' in the economic chain was accepted, largely in the absence of alternative marketing opportunities.

All three donor-sponsored projects had serious problems in governance and management, signifying fundamental inadequacies in institutional setup and embedding. The institutional problems of the donor-supported projects have been caused in no small degree by the very development perspectives and *modus operandi* adopted by the development agencies. Giving projects away ('handing over') without any reciprocal obligation is a recipe for unbalanced relationships. Indigenous staff ('counterparts') had to be appointed in the absence of competent candidates; expectations of 'community participation' in governance and management were not based on a tradition of genuine group representation. The time trajectory required for the establishment of a substantial,

sustainable and dependable productive base has been underrated in two out of the three major development projects. Projects were supposed to achieve 'sustainability' under adverse operating conditions. The one activity that has not been designed as a major development project, in contrast, resembles most closely a normal trading business. It did not encounter the institutional and management problems of the typical donor-funded projects.

Paradoxically – and paradox seems to be a major characteristic of development agencies – the interventions in the Gwembe Tonga crafts tradition, at this point in time, have created a disjointed Gwembe Tonga crafts world, that is, a crafts world populated by parties which lack mutual understanding and stable relationships. The tradition, before the intervention, was largely based on direct relationships of people living in one and the same world. The interventions opened up this universe and linked it to external economic, political, social and cultural realities. As agents of change, the projects were and are no part of Gwembe Tonga life itself. The development projects still are, to a considerable extent, strangers in a strange land and treated as such.

Notes

The research data concerning 'traditional' crafts are mostly based on practices of the southern part of the Zambian Gwembe Valley. Within the context of this paper it was not possible to extensively deal with regional variation and the effects on the crafts tradition by interaction with neighbouring peoples (Goba, Shona and Ndebele).

Much of the original research data has been provided by Mr E. Syabbalo, former Senior Gwembe Valley officer of the Choma Museum and Crafts Centre. He lives in the Mweemba

chieftaincy. His Chitonga terminology has been used throughout. Crafts-related terminology is not standardized amongst the Gwembe Tonga. Neither is the Chitonga (or ciTonga) language. There is, for example, considerable variation between designations employed by Reynolds (1968) and with Chitonga names featured in the catalogue of the Omay Crafts Centre at the northern part of the Zimbabwean side of Lake Kariba.

Developments as of 2000 must only have reinforced Gwembe Tonga scepticism about 'alien bodies' in their midst. The collapse of Zimbabwean tourism and the economy has made life for crafts makers very hard. Omay Crafts Centre no longer exists. Binga Crafts Centre is still operative but is desperately trying to survive. The Choma Museum and Crafts Centre has greatly scaled down its operations in the Gwembe Valley due to costs not covered by income. Positively, the Munyumbwe women's clubs have continued to grow. There are now many of them and Munyumbwe has developed into one of the three prominent Zambian basket-making centres. Most of the trade at production base is informal. Yet these baskets are now found all over the world.

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CHAPTER VII

Marriage Customs, Patterns and Practices, and Sexual Networks Among the Tonga of Southern Province, Zambia in the Era of HIV and AIDS

Jacob R. S. Malungo

Introduction

Marriage systems are interconnected to the spread of HIV, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where it has taken a severe toll. Zambia lies in a hyper epidemic region where the disease is generalized and has had serious socio-cultural and economic implications, eroding quality of life and reducing life expectancy by decades. The pandemic is mainly supported by high-risk sexual behaviours, notably multiple sexual partnerships and multiple concurrent partners with a low usage of condoms. In 2001–02, 15.6 per cent of all people aged fifteen to forty-nine in Zambia were living with HIV. Infection was higher among women (17.8 per cent) than men (12.9 per cent) (CSO et al. 2003: 236). Although the level has declined to an overall 14.3 per cent (12.3 per cent among men and 16.1 per cent among women) (CSO et al. 2009), more preventive measures have to be put in place if the scourge is to be halted and quality of life and longevity improved. The main preventive measures lie in addressing high-risk factors promoting the disease's spread.

The sociological argument for examining marriage customs, patterns and practices in relation to HIV is that socially prescribed sexual behaviour within defined societies can be understood

virtually everywhere in relation to prevailing marriage forms within those societies (Radcliffe-Brown and Forde 1950; Fox 1967; Parkin and Nyamwaya 1987). The constellation of marriage customs, patterns and practices among the BaTonga, the main occupants of Southern Province, may shed light on patterns of sexual behaviours and networks that promote multiple sexual partners, extramarital sexual relations and multiple concurrent partnerships that increase the risk of HIV infection. Notable high-risk marriage customs and practices among the BaTonga include *maali* (polygamous unions), *kusalazya* (sexual cleansing), *kulya zyina* (inheritance of a name to the deceased) and its associated *kunjilila mung'anda* (levirate marriage), and *kutizya* (eloping). Marriage and cohabitation can generally be considered to be the primary indicators of exposure to the risks of HIV infection. This paper, therefore, discusses the intertwined relationship between these practices and the spread of AIDS.

Marriage Customs, Patterns and Practices, and Sexual Networks

In order to understand the changes that have occurred in marriage practices in Zambia, a number of anthropological studies were examined (Colson 1945, 1949, 1960, 1971; Mackintosh 1950; Barnes 1951; Scudder 1962, 1995; Mair 1969; Clark et al. 1995). Additional information was gathered from key informant interviews with elders who have lived through many generations (generally three to five) and from an intensive study in both rural and urban areas comprised of many focus group discussions, a large-scale quantitative survey of one thousand people, participatory observations, and in-depth narratives (Malungo 2000).

Many informants said that marriage as an institution in Zambia was respected and it was almost everyone's desire to

marry (Colson 1949). Recent data suggests that marriage is near-universal: all men aged fifty years and above had been married while only less than one per cent of women aged thirty-five and above had never been married (CSO et al. 2003). Marriage occurs earlier and is more common among females than males. Many informants said that Zambian society is especially biased against women of marriageable age who remain unmarried because they risk becoming *bakapenta* (women prostitutes who paint their lips and look for men). Because Zambian society prefers for women to marry and start reproducing, there is much pressure put on them. During focus group discussions (especially in rural area), it was repeatedly observed that women can only remain unmarried if they are badly behaved, lazy or ugly, but this is not necessarily the case for men. There is need for the women to marry and start reproducing. It is only *nsundi* (barren and sterile) women who may not want to marry. If she cannot find her own suitor it is even better for her to go into a polygamous union.

Traditionally society did not tolerate partners who are not legally married living together. Cohabitation is still generally low: less than one per cent for both males and females in the country (CSO 1995, 2004; CSO et al. 1996, 1997, 2003; University of Zambia et al. 1993). Many informants said that a woman who stayed over at a man's home (and by implication had sexual intercourse) was never allowed to go back to her natal family because she would bring *malweza* (misfortune) into the family. She would be chased back to the man who had taken her, who would, in turn, usually marry her.

Traditional Arranged Marriages

Traditionally parents were obliged to look for the best suitors when their children wanted to marry, which reduced contact

between partners and prevented premarital sexual acts. Young males had little opportunity to make the acquaintance of girls. One key informant commented that ‘there is a very big difference between what we see nowadays and what we used to do. We never used to have a situation whereby *mbobayandanina balikke bakwatana* (the two partners come to love each other and marry)’. The consensus of a focus group discussion among urban women between thirty-five and seventy was that young people never chose their spouses:

No! We were not allowed to choose ourselves. Parents used to *kweeba* (negotiate between themselves and betrothe the girl). You just get married to a certain man from a *mukowa antela ciinga antela cipani* (certain compatible clan) without your consent. You do not know the man! That is why some women wanted to run back to their parents after they had been taken to the man’s house or when *kujosya matende* (temporarily returned to their natal family after marriage). You know a man *ulayoosya* (is frightening) when sleeping *ulafwooma* [figuratively implying that he pants a lot during sexual intercourse]. But the parents would send us back to him, if we ran away, saying that we were married and the man was now our husband, mother and father.

Though more common in other parts of Africa (Mair 1969), this study did not find evidence of beating, suicide or absconding from marriage related to the wrong choice of a partner. Informants said this was attributed to the ‘wisdom’ of parents who chose the best suitors and also to the good training they had given their children.

In describing how the parents used to know when to look for a partner for their son – and simultaneously emphasizing what qualities they looked for – one 83-year-old rural man explained:

When the man felt that he should marry, he only had to start playing *kalumbu antela kankobela* [musical instruments consisting of small strips of metal attached to a wooden base and a gourd sounding board]. You do not have to tell the old men that you want to marry! You just refuse eating and continue playing the instrument all night through! When your father is fed up with the noise at night, he would go to report to the child's maternal uncle that his nephew makes noise at night. The uncle would discuss the issue with the nephew to confirm that he really wants to marry. The relatives would gather and decide on an appropriate and well-behaved family, where no stealing, witchcraft or family disruptions such as fighting or divorce are common. You don't have to tell your relatives which woman you want to marry; they will look for the best one for you.

To ensure they got the best family, it was widely reported that the boy's relatives would go and *baakusonda kumung'anga* (consult fortune-tellers or diviners). People were generally looking for families with whom it would be easy to discuss a number of issues once these families became one kin through marriage. The *mung'anga* (diviner) would throw the *inkakata* (bones) and the answer was determined by the way the dice fell (Colson 1949). Alternatively, the diviner used a small gourd in which a tiny horn rested. The diviner held the gourd in his hand while he put his question, and the answer was determined by whether the horn rotated constantly or came to rest. At a later stage, when mirrors were introduced, a diviner gazed into an ordinary mirror or into a fragment of one (Colson 1949).

Both young and old, male and female, informants said that nowadays most people who want to marry chose their own partners. Of the survey respondents, 66 per cent had arranged their own marriage, 30 per cent had their partners chosen by

their parents, 3 per cent were chosen by other relatives, and 1 per cent were chosen by friends. One focus group of girls under twenty years old explained:

Nowadays we the girls have a say as to whom we are going to marry. In fact it is us who have to agree when the boys propose love and marriage to us. Most times we have to test and really see whether the boys love us by not consenting to their proposals the first time they approach us. It is only if we love them that we agree and even then we have to decide whether to marry them or sometimes break off the relationship. It is only when you are old enough, love and want to marry that boy that we inform the parents. Some people marry even if some of their relatives and parents reject their proposals to marry a certain boy or girl.

Older informants worried that the reduced role of the parents in choosing a suitor for their children was responsible for high divorce rates and increased marital problems. Younger informants did not agree with this, arguing that they took the task of choosing their spouses seriously. For them, critical factors included:

- *Bubumbe antela bube bwamuntu* (appearance and 'structure'): how beautiful or handsome a person is was mentioned by many respondents as a critical factor. Youths wanted beautiful people who would not put them to shame when they were with friends. Girls complained that often 'ugly' boys had more courage in approaching them. Handsome youths are a problem because *mbanji babayanda* (they are in demand).
- *Muntu muvwubi* (a wealthy person): the girls complained that some of the boys who had approached

them and promised marriage could hardly provide for themselves. They said that such boys could not afford to provide for a larger family if they married them. Younger men indicated that it was becoming increasingly difficult to marry girls because they were just looking for rich men, who happen to be older and married. Even parents these days are more concerned with wealth. It was feared that this tendency would promote eloping and abduction on the part of young males. Boys responded that even if eloping meant that they would have to pay more in the long run (in terms of fines), at least they would have married the girl of their choice.

- *Muntu ulomene* (behaviour): most people said that they wanted well-behaved partners. Some suitors would compromise on beauty if the person was well-behaved and wealthy (*muntu ulomene alimwi kavwubide*). However, it was acknowledged that it was difficult to be sure of a person's behaviour because many were good at pretence.

Also, girls preferred a boy who visited their homes during the day and not at night, thus preventing premarital sexual activities. Young women's main fear was premarital pregnancy, which would jeopardize their chances of marrying. They also did not want a boy who refused to be introduced to their parents.

On the other side, boys said that they did not want a girl who introduced them to her parents immediately after the commencement of their love affair. This was because they do not want to have a binding affair right from the start – they prefer to freely make up their mind whether to marry a girl. However, it was also recognized that such demands

from a girl were to help her assess whether a boy would deny responsibility should he make her pregnant; parents who have previously met the boy may assist in pinning down the boy's responsibility. Despite preferring to meet during the day, boys and girls often referred to their sexual relations during the day, at dusk, or at night in nearby bushes and especially at ceremonies.

- *Bantu beendelana* (compatibility): this included socio-economic class, religious association and tribal inclination.
- Age: girls preferred men slightly older than themselves, and boys wanted younger females. There was a feeling of discontentment if it was to be other way round: boys suggested that they would be laughed at for *kukwata banyoko alimwi kacembele* (marrying their 'mothers'), while girls thought they would be mocked for marrying *kana kacizwa mamina kumpemo* ('babies' and inexperienced people). The girls argued that they did not want to start 'babysitting' those small boys. A few males, however, approved of boys marrying women slightly older than themselves and argued that such women knew how to keep marriages stable and their husbands happy. Also a few females said that they preferred girls marrying men younger than themselves so that they could have more influence on their younger husbands.

In choosing suitors, however, it was very clear that health issues and the risk of infectious disease was not paramount. Most youths (more than seventy-five per cent) admitted to engaging in premarital sexual activities that expose them to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Males may lure

girls into sexual acts by promising marriage; if they become pregnant, the girls are often abandoned for other lovers. Premarital sex was consistently higher among males than females in both the rural and urban areas. Cultural expectations of male sexual prowess contribute to this; also, girls tend to have lower esteem and negotiating skills.

Eloping

Young males complained that it was frustrating to love girls who rejected their proposals, and cited this as a factor leading to elopements (the term used for secretly taking a girl in the night to marry her). This practice may exacerbate the spread of sexually transmitted infections if one of the partners is already infected. One man in his early seventies elaborated on the practice:

The boy would take the girl he had eloped with to a place without the knowledge of both parents – say, to his uncle – and there he would declare her his wife. *Waakumana kumubbwantaukila wamujosya* (the man would ensure that he impregnated her before coming back) to face three charges: *mulandu wakutizya* (one for eloping), *mulandu wakuminsya* (the other for impregnating her), and the third one *mulandu wamafwenenzya* (neglecting to pay bride wealth). However, the boy would be given a grace period to find the payment, considering that he wanted to marry her.

In most cases, however, it was reported that the uncles came earlier to report that the couple was at their homestead and that they would accept any resulting fines and payments. Sometimes before reaching the intended destination, however, some girls would manage to run away; or if the girl gave the

boy trouble, he might let her loose. In such events, the girls were not expected to enter their parents' yards until an egg, preferably a rotten one, was thrown at her. This symbolized her being 'cleansed' from any possible *malweza* (misfortunes) arising from her association with the man or failed abduction. If not well cleansed, misfortunes such as death of her siblings or other close relatives were believed to be possible. As such, open premarital sexual relationships were not traditionally common and eloping is increasingly renounced. Of survey respondents, only 12 per cent approved of it, and when asked what type of marriage they would opt for if given a chance, 50 per cent chose religious, 43 per cent a well-arranged traditional marriage, 3 per cent civil, 3 per cent elopement, and 1 per cent were unsure.

Polygamy

Maali or polygamous union can have two outcomes on the spread of HIV. The first is that the spread can be minimized if all those in the union stick to the one male sexual partner. In Uganda this has generally been termed 'zero grazing'. The female sexual partners prevent other partners from joining their 'closed' circle, and the man also does not acquire additional partners. The second, and more common, outcome is that polygyny increases the number of sexual partners for various socio-cultural and economic reasons. Since these are long-term relationships, use of condoms among the many partners is minimal.

In 2001–02, 15.8 per cent of women and 9.1 per cent of men in Zambia were in a polygamous union. Polygyny is most common in Southern Province where 29.9 per cent of women had co-wives and 18.1 per cent of men had two and more wives (CSO et al. 2003). Polygyny slightly decreased in 2007;

14.4 per cent of women and 8.1 per cent of the men in Zambia were in polygamous unions with the highest proportion again reported in Southern Province where 24.7 per cent of women had co-wives and 14.9 per cent of the men had two or more wives (CSO et al. 2009). The lowest percentage of polygyny in 2001–02 was reported in the Copperbelt at 3.4 per cent among women and 0.7 per cent among men. In 2007, however, the lowest proportion was recorded in Lusaka at 4.3 per cent among women and 2.5 per cent among men (CSO et al. 2003, 2009). When asked why they had entered into polygynous unions, 34 per cent of this study's survey respondents said they liked polygyny; 10 per cent said that there were no unmarried men interested in marrying them; 5 per cent said that their husbands had deceived them, saying that they were not married; and another 5 per cent said that they became pregnant before deciding to get married. Two rural women indicated that they were culturally expected to be in such a union, one rural woman was inherited, and one urban woman had been promised by the man that he would divorce his first wife in preference for her. Polygynous men, however, rarely divorce their first wives after marrying junior ones. Still other women said they were first wives that did not want to divorce their husbands when they married junior wives.

A number of women in maali or polygynous unions indicated that they had extramarital relations when their husbands failed to meet their financial, sexual, material and emotional needs. Such women revealed that they needed sexual satisfaction from other men because their husbands had 'sexually retired' them, or no longer had sexual intercourse with them. Sexual retirement was common among older, senior wives with many co-wives, or those not most loved by their husbands.

Eighty-eight per cent of respondents disapproved of polygynous unions and informants stated that polygyny

is likely to decline due to fears of contracting HIV. One traditional ruler, who himself was married to four women, commented:

I see that in the near future only those of us who got into this type of union [polygyny] long ago will be in them because many people nowadays do not enter into polygyny because they fear contracting *sikalileke* (AIDS).

Besides fear of HIV, another reason offered for avoiding polygyny was religious conviction. In one discussion, men who themselves have more than one wife, argued that some people entered into polygynous unions because of prostitution, lust and *mbavwuule* (sexual immorality). Most religious groups in Zambia do not approve of multiple wives and those that do (such as Islam and Zion) have only small followings (Akramuzzaman 1979; CSO et al. 1997).

Widespread economic hardship also dissuaded some from polygyny: it was explained that if a man marries many women, they would cause his economic downfall because many wives demand a lot of care and economic support. One polygynous man remarked:

You know that you have no work that the women can do for you, but *wabakwata bamakaintu kwamana kozyi biya kuti kunyina a mulimo ngoyakubabelesya* (you go ahead and marry them)! This is prostitution as you only marry these women because they are beautiful. Even those who marry them off into such unions go ahead when they already know the capacities and behaviour of such men. They keep on marrying until *zyikaintu inga limwi zyakwiile kukutubya* (the women take away all your wealth). Therefore, polygynous unions are for two types of people – those who deserve to have them and those who should not.

Extramarital Sexual Relations

An investigation of perceptions and practices of extramarital sexual relations showed that all informants condemned them even though more than 75 per cent of respondents were convinced both men and women regularly have them. Some people, including court officials, indicated that if adultery is committed, heavy fines and punishments were executed: for example, the offended man would be given any number of animals or amount of money he demanded and any children born of the adulterous relationship would also be given to the woman's husband. However, whether such beliefs and punishments actually prevent marital infidelity is another issue.

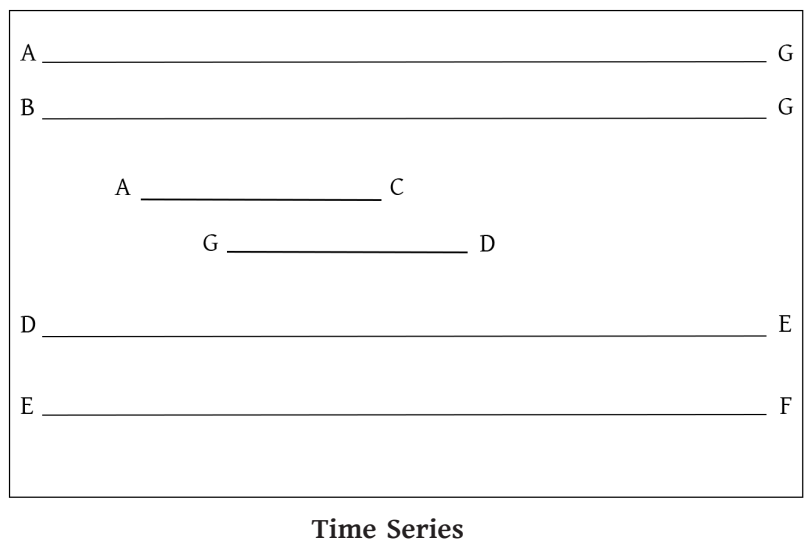
Close to 40 per cent of men in extramarital relationships were said to be having sexual relations mainly with married women, about a third with single women, one in seven with prostitutes, and less than ten per cent with either married or single previous girlfriends. Occasionally they had casual sexual relations with other partners such as work colleagues (2 per cent), but hardly ever with sisters-in-law, other relatives, or cousins (all less than 1 per cent). The main reasons men gave for having extramarital relations included habit (29 per cent), pleasure (21 per cent), marital problems (16 per cent), and dissatisfaction with his wife or the need for variety and experimenting.

Married women reported having extramarital relations mainly with married men (67 per cent), either married or single previous boyfriends (13 per cent), and casual partners (8 per cent). Like males, females had little sexual involvement with brothers-in-law (1 per cent), cousins or other relatives (less than one per cent). Other partners (10 per cent), probably prostitutes, were not ruled out. Women's reasons were to acquire monetary and material gain (35 per cent), habit

(21 per cent), for pleasure (14 per cent), marital problems (12 per cent) and dissatisfaction with spouse (9 per cent). Women rarely had extramarital sex because of their husbands' infertility (2 per cent), as proof of their sexual prowess, or because of cultural expectations, wearying of old relationships or to experiment (all less than one per cent).

Most extramarital relations tended to last a long time and become multiple concurrent relationships. Multiple concurrent partnerships is a serious risk factor for both polygynous and monogamous unions. Study informants narrated typical concurrent sexual relations as in the case of two men in polygynous unions (Figure 2): one man is depicted as G and the other as E. Partner G was married to wives A and B and partner E was married to wives D and F.

Figure 2



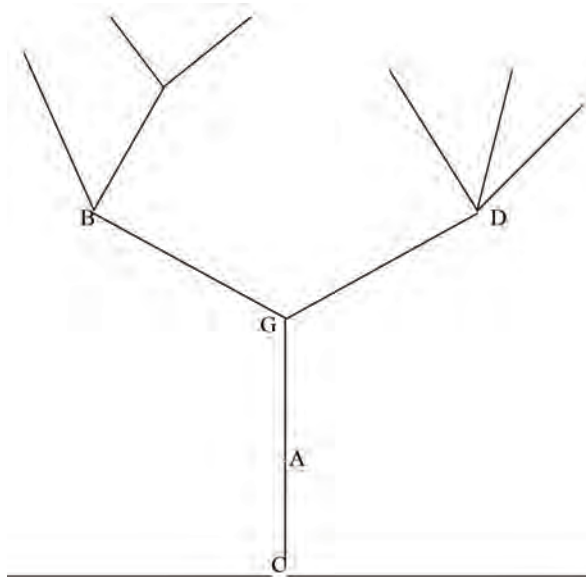
A woman in one union, a 'core individual' (wife A) who was having a long sexual relationship with her husband (G), is said to have contracted HIV during a short sexual encounter with an urban

sexual partner (C). When she returned to the village she infected her husband (G), who was also having sexual relations with the wife (D) of the man (E) in the other polygynous union. Lines B–G and E–F depict other unions in the polygynous marriages.

Husband G was like a bridge to the other union. These people had other sexual relations or 'links' and at the time of the survey, all six people in the two polygynous unions (A, B, G, D, E and F), plus four others in the sexual network, had already died.

What was observed in these polygynous unions postulates an 'AIDS Tree' (Figure 3), showing married or unmarried relationships with multiple sexual partners. The 'stem' (A), contracted the disease from the carrier ('root' C), and spread it across the 'branches' through partners B and D, resulting in ten deaths. Other people involved in the sexual network (the many branches) were reported to be sickly as well. Such high-risk sexual behavioural networks are the main catalysts for the rapid spread of HIV.

Figure 3: An AIDS Tree from Concurrent Relationships Observed in Figure 2



Traditionally, however, there also seem to have been extramarital sexual relations that were 'permitted'. These included:

- Sterility during marriage: many informants said that a large number of tribes in Zambia, whether matrilineal or patrilineal, used to arrange for a man to father children on another man's behalf if he was sterile. If a woman was sterile, the family encouraged and possibly arranged, perhaps with the assistance of the first wife, her husband's marriage to an additional wife.
- Exchange of wives: a practice known as *lubambo* among the Ila-Tonga of Namwala District in Southern Province. This involved formal and public cohabitation of a woman with a man other than her husband, at the man's home. This was done especially among age mates. At marriage, the wife would be given the name of a man's age mate who would have 'right of passage' to the women after she married. Informants indicated that the woman would be expected to go and 'visit' (have sexual acts with the age mate of the husband) at an appointed time (say, two or three days during planting season). She also would be expected to assist the man with farm and household tasks. In turn this lover would make gifts of animals to her husband. If the husband considered these insufficient, or felt that his wife was spending too much time with the lover, he may treat that relationship as mere adultery and demand damages, just as he would if any other men had sexual relations with her.
- Sexual cleansing: many tribes in the region (for instance, the Bemba, Tonga and Yao in Zambia)

performed this ritual in order to chase away the spirit of the deceased spouse. If there were no unmarried people to ‘sexually cleanse’ (have sex with) the widowed person, married men – but rarely women – would be expected to perform this ritual (Malungo 1999). Many other alternative rituals have evolved to replace sexual cleansing (Malungo 2001), but there is still desire and pressure from some people to conduct this practice, which they see as the best method. In some cases these days, spouses doing the cleansing are encouraged to have an HIV test first and such sexual relations end up as marriages.

- *Kulya zyina* (inheritance of the name of a deceased person): when a person died, another person – either the one appointed for sexual cleansing or a different one – would be given the name of the deceased. Often lovers to the deceased would attempt to continue an affair with the one who had taken over the deceased’s name. This, in turn, increased the risk of spreading sexual infections.

Condom Use

Clearly, safer sex with non-regular sexual partners needs to be promoted. Condom use in the country, however, remains very low for both married and unmarried partners. In 2002 only 4 per cent of all women were using either male or female condoms: 3.8 per cent of married females and 15.5 per cent of unmarried females. Use of female condoms is very rare: only 2.9 per cent of unmarried and 1.1 per cent of married women reported ever having used them (CSO et al. 2003). In 2007 5 per cent of all women were using either male (5 per cent) or female (0 per cent) condoms (CSO et al. 2009). Young females

in a rural area highlighted some of their reservations about condoms:

Some men *mbafubafuba* (are very stupid). *Zyiladonkola tupila kazyitaninga njila* (they prick the condoms using pins just before they penetrate a woman's vagina)! When you look at him you see that he is wearing a condom but it is torn.

Male focus group discussions confirmed this phenomenon and offered various defences for it. Some men wished to 'punish' women who resisted having sex with them, while others said they pricked condoms in order to make their partner pregnant. That is, two types of punishment were given to the 'naughty' girls – one infecting them with a sexually transmitted disease, the other impregnating them. A local chief, in a different chiefdom, also corroborated it and asserted that condoms were not useful:

People involved in HIV/AIDS campaigns should stop bringing condoms to my area as some men prick them during sex. Instead we should have heavy punishment for those caught having unlawful sexual relations. This will discourage others from doing the same.

As to why many men do not like using condoms, a rural community health worker in his early forties used a metaphor:

I have been told by many people that using condoms is like a person taking a shower while wearing a rain coat. You do not feel anything and it is just better not having it [sexual intercourse] at all. Using condoms is disliked just like having 'wet' sex. *Kunyina ancocita* (there is nothing you are doing)! You must fully enjoy the act, not prevent this enjoyment.

Conclusion and Recommendations

While marriage is still valuable and respected in Zambia, there are many high-risk factors surrounding marriage customs, patterns and practices that lead to increased sexual networks. Because of their economic vulnerability and cultural pressures, women tend to marry earlier and more often than men. Among young people, wealth, age, compatibility and beauty are more often taken into account when choosing a spouse than health, and few people undertake an HIV test prior to marriage.

Practices such as polygyny, extramarital sex, sexual cleansing and exchange of partners also contribute to new HIV infections. Polygyny, in particular, increases concurrent sexual partners when women are sexually retired by their husbands. A web of sexual partners, or an AIDS Tree, has the capacity to rapidly spread the virus and these are not confined to married people.

Efforts to address these patterns must be made. The following specific recommendations should be considered:

1. Initiate appropriate legal frameworks to prevent and protect women from 'sexual retirement'.
2. Encourage individual, couple, family and community counselling on the dangers of HIV/AIDS and fostering behavioural changes.
3. Discourage women from 'investing in marriage', but rather empower them to own land, property and other means of production.
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5. Strengthen behavioural change communication (BCC) and messaging through popular media to assist people in identifying high-risk factors.

6. Engage all the stakeholders – including religious, civic and traditional leaders, and community, public and private partners – in fostering behavioural change.
7. Encourage partners who are already in polygynous unions to prevent acquisition of other partners into their circle – that is, promote ‘zero grazing’ among married partners.
8. Discourage multiple sexual partners among both monogamous and polygamous unions.
9. Promote the use of all available prevention methods, especially both male and female condoms, among sexually active people.
10. Empower vulnerable groups (including widows and youths) by developing vocational skills.
11. Develop sexual negotiation skills among youths and females.
12. Encourage youths to undertake premarital counselling and HIV tests to avoid unknowingly marrying partners who are already infected with HIV.

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CHAPTER VIII

Gender, Culture, HIV and AIDS in Contemporary Southern Zambia

Anne L. Sikwibele¹

Introduction

This paper examines the intersections between gender, culture, and HIV/AIDS. It answers questions related to whether some Tonga cultural beliefs, practices and traditions could be risk factors in the spread of HIV and AIDS in Southern Province, Zambia. It highlights the gender dimensions of some cultural practices that are found in most communities of the area that are believed to be linked to the spread of HIV. Among the engrained cultural practices that are discussed are polygamy (*maali*), sexual cleansing (*kusalazya*), widow inheritance (*kunjilila mung'anda*), sex culture and extramarital affairs (*bumambe*). While some justifications for these practices are provided, the paper also looks at the risk factors arising from these practices in an era of HIV/AIDS. The gender dimensions that emerge from these practices are also discussed, as well as implications for gender equality and issues of women's empowerment.

The significance of the study is demonstrated by the priorities of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

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including gender equality and empowerment of women (the third goal) and efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (the sixth goal). Within global, regional and national contexts, gender has emerged as a critical construct for analysing social situations and other social categories such as culture, class, age, ethnicity and race. This study focuses on gender and culture as key social constructs in examining the life of Tonga people in contemporary Southern Province. First it assesses the situation of HIV/AIDS in Zambia and prevailing gender dynamics. Then it examines gender, culture and policy contexts, key cultural practices and traditions of the Tonga, and finally makes some conclusions and recommendations.

Gender and HIV/AIDS in Zambia

It is estimated that of the forty million people worldwide living with AIDS, 18.5 million are women. Sub-Saharan Africa has up to 28.2 million people living with HIV (both adults and children) and up to 2.4 million have already died from AIDS (UNAIDS 2007). Zambia has experienced one of the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates on the continent. The Zambian population stands at 13.5 million, of which an estimated 14.3 per cent of the adult population aged fifteen to forty-nine are HIV-positive. Women have a higher infection rate of 18 per cent compared to 13 per cent for men. The peak age for HIV among females is twenty to twenty-nine, while for males it is thirty to thirty-nine. Women aged fifteen to nineteen are five times more likely to be infected than men of the same age group (National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council 2003; Sikwibele 2010). These statistics show the extent to which women are more at risk than men.

Currently, it is estimated that the HIV prevalence rates in Zambia have levelled at 14.3 per cent with urban areas having a higher infection rate of 25 per cent compared to 13 per cent for rural areas. AIDS-related deaths were estimated to have increased from around ten thousand in 1990 to one hundred thousand in 2003 (National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council 2003), devastating the country's development through reduced productivity in the workforce, increased mortality and increased poverty levels. As can be seen from these statistics, the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to kill many economically active people.

In terms of gender differences, women are more vulnerable to infection than men due to their biological differences, which could be compounded by cultural practices, social relations, and other gender dynamics that dictate the behaviour and responses of women to men. Some of the documented risk factors include extended sexual relationships with multiple partners, the practice of polygamy and sex culture (National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council 2003; Nkunika et al. 1998). Others within the feminist tradition have attributed women's higher risk to the role of behaviours seen as more commonly masculine, i.e. the utilization and reliance on sexual violence and rape by men (Cleaver 2002). Among the key factors identified as perpetuating the transmission of HIV in Zambia are social-cultural beliefs and practices subordinating women in society and rendering them vulnerable to infection (National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council 2003). The Tonga are matrilineal, but cultural practices that promote patriarchal practices, beliefs and norms still affect women negatively and contribute to the rapid proliferation of HIV and AIDS in women. It is therefore critical for communities as well as researchers to explore ways of addressing unequal gender and power relations as part of a strategy for dealing with the epidemic.

Contextualizing Gender, Culture and Policy in Zambia

This paper utilizes an approach that conceptualizes gender as different from sex. It uses gender in reference to social attributes that prescribe differentiated responsibilities, roles, norms, and modes of behaviour for females and males. The construct also implies an examination of relations between women and men with reference to differential constraints and opportunities. It is understood, therefore, that gender roles are influenced by culture, traditions and customs. The ideology of gender is closely related to those of custom and tradition, which direct women's and men's lives in terms of ensuring conformity to societal norms (Sweetman 1995). Culture, on the other hand, consists of the beliefs, attitudes, traditions, ideas and civilization of a group of people. Culture is ubiquitous, central to people's lives and shapes the way we see the world; it is the myriad ways people preserve society and meet a range of human needs (Robinson-Wood 2005). However differences exist between and within countries based on constructs such as gender, culture, ethnicity, social class and race. In an article about targeting men for changes in AIDS discourse and activism in Africa, Bujra (2002) argues for recognition of the fact that AIDS is a gendered phenomenon – that where it is transmitted heterosexually, women require men's cooperation in order to protect themselves (in terms of sexual faithfulness, negotiating safer sex and using condoms) (Cleaver 2002). This idea is critical for Southern Province because gender and culture constitute key constructs in an analysis of social life as well as issues surrounding the spread of AIDS.

Zambian population statistics show that there are more women than men. However, there are disparities in different aspects of life such as income levels of male- and female-headed households, with male households having higher incomes.

However, Zambia, like other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, is guided by the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). According to Article 3:

States shall take in all fields all appropriate measures, including legislation to ensure the full development and advancement of women for purposes of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on the basis of equality with men.

Furthermore, according to the National Gender Policy (Zambia Cabinet Office, Gender in Development Division 2000), the Zambian government's vision is to achieve full participation of both women and men in the development process at all levels in order to ensure sustainable development of equality and equity between the sexes.

Cultural practices, norms and values in many African countries, including Zambia and Southern Province, do act as barriers to gender equality and pose key challenges to fundamental rights and freedoms of women because they continue to govern women's private sphere. Although Zambia has made some commitments to gender equality through its various legal frameworks such as CEDAW, the SADC gender policy (SADC 2009) and the National Gender Policy (Zambia Cabinet Office, Gender in Development Division 2000), the attainment of MDG goals still remains a challenge partly due to cultural practices, traditions and norms.

Cultural practices, traditional beliefs and customs continue to greatly influence the organization and functioning of Tonga communities. These are followed in most villages of the province and have not been influenced by modernization. The practices are similar in both rural and urban areas, although more pronounced in rural centres. Such rituals include those

related to polygamous marriages, death, sexual cleansing and inheritance of widows, inheritance of family name after the death of a breadwinner and many others outside the scope of this paper.

Explaining the Study's Methodological Approach and Findings

Methodology

The research study utilized qualitative participatory methods to find out what factors people believed were contributing to the spread of HIV/AIDS and what could be done to reduce or stop them. The objective was to get views from various groups of people such as youths, women and men, and key informants such as chiefs, headmen/women, teachers, and political, spiritual or other leaders. This study is based on research carried out in selected schools and communities in the eleven districts of Southern Province between 2001 and 2005.

A group consisting of researchers, school authorities and government officials from the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Health conducted the sampling of the communities. In nine districts, five schools and six villages surrounding each of the schools were selected for the study. This resulted in thirty villages or communities per district, for a total of 270 villages. In Namwala and Itezhi-Tezhi, however, only three schools and six villages each were sampled, totalling thirty-six villages. Therefore, 306 villages in total in all the eleven districts were covered in the research.

The study relied on a variety of qualitative methodologies. Researchers engaged respondents in open dialogue and communication in order to bring out true insights into

women's experiences. They stayed for ten days at each site in order to live with people, observe, interact, and understand the communities and their culture, beliefs and customs. Focus-group discussions (FGDs) with youths and adult women and men covered what social and cultural factors contribute to the proliferation of HIV/AIDS in the community and possible interventions. Semi-structured and in-depth interviews were also held with key people such as teachers, parent-teacher-association members, community members and traditional leaders. In addition, participant observations were carried out whereby researchers kept diaries of important occurrences and observations in the community pertaining to social, political and cultural issues.

At the end of ten days, community drama (or 'theatre for development') was performed. Researchers acted alongside community members, teachers and students, and each drama served as a verification process and opportunity for the community to offer feedback on whether it accurately depicted what was occurring in village life. While entertaining them, it also sensitized people to the issues raised or observed. Data was transcribed manually in order to identify the emerging and recurring themes and sub-themes on which this study is based.

Main Findings

The study set out to discover what community members believed to be the key contributors to the spread of HIV. In all the districts, focus-group discussions (FGDs), key-informant interviews and semi-structured interviews underscored the underlying influence of cultural practices, norms and traditions on the day-to-day lives of the Tonga. As Colson reported earlier (1960), many of the major cultural practices and traditions relate to marriage, death and other special rituals or occasions.

What emerged from the study was that most of the practices were applied in a gendered manner. The following practices and behaviours were verified by community members as key in putting people at risk of HIV infection: polygamy, sexual cleansing, widow inheritance, extramarital affairs, sex culture and sexual networks. This paper focuses on those factors that had high rankings in relation to the spread of HIV, as well as having adverse consequences on gender relations. They are listed by district in Figure 4.

Cultural Practices and Beliefs Relating to Polygamous Marriages

Marriage has been reported to be a very important aspect of life among the Tonga and both men and women see it as an inevitable aspect of their lives (Colson 1958). The value of marriage is sometimes linked to the wealth rankings of Tonga men, implying that the higher the number of wives, the richer the man in relation to other men in the village. However, polygamy can also be linked to power relations and the way in which this demonstrates men's power and control over women. Polygamy (*maali*) among the Tonga is acceptable and was identified as a risk factor in ten out of eleven districts (91 per cent).

Livingstone was the only district where polygamy was not reported as a factor contributing to the spread of HIV. According to classic studies of the Gwembe Tonga, polygamy has a long history and is an acceptable and common practice among both young men and old. A cultural context where the practice is accepted as natural leads adolescent boys to assume that they will have a number of wives; and some already have a number of lovers (Colson 1960).

Figure 4: Cultural Factors Connected to the Spread of HIV and AIDS by District, Southern Province

District	Polygamy	Sexual Cleansing	Widow Inheritance	Night Rituals or Festivals	Many Partners, Promiscuity in Sex Culture	Sex as Commodity	Tattoos, Sex, Herbs
Kazungula	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Choma	x	x	x	x	x		x
Kalomo	x	x		x	x		x
Livingstone					x	x	
Sinazongwe	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Gwembe	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Mazabuka	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Monze	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Siaavonga	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Namwala	x			x	x	x	
Itezhi-Tezhi		x		x	x		
Total	9 (81%)	9 (81%)	8 (73%)	10 (91%)	11 (100%)	8 (73%)	4 (36%)

x = present in the district

In a focus-group discussion with a group of women at Hanyimbo Village near St Patrick's school in Gwembe, the following justifications for polygamy were provided:

- Farm work and the need to produce more food leads men to marry many wives who can share those responsibilities, leading to higher productivity.
- When one wife is sick, the others are there to assist her with the work of caring for children.
- There is a three-month waiting period for women to have sex after delivery of a child; during this time, there are other wives to serve the husband and prevent him from suffering from *kakwekwe*, a disease that manifests like HIV with no cure.
- Similarly, when women have their menstruation, they cannot have sex and he may develop *kakwekwe*. Polygamy provides him with alternatives.

The general advantages of polygamous marriages given by the men's focus group included:

- Its links to agricultural output: the more women and children present, the higher the productivity on the farm. This makes a lot of sense for agricultural Tonga communities.
- Men with more women command greater respect and prestige, and are perceived to be richer. A man who is able to take care of many wives and children distinguishes himself as a responsible person and therefore a source of pride, power and status in the village.
- Polygamy facilitates the reduction of extramarital affairs for men, as they have several wives at home.

Typically it was the positive aspects of polygamy that were discussed, yet the practice has several negative implications for gender relations, some of which are not obvious. While men obtain power, prestige and pride through many wives, the wives are disempowered, left at the mercy of the husband's schedule for companionship and support. It is the husband who decides who does what, who gets what and when. In many cases, men fail to provide adequately for their wives and children because of the sheer numbers of people involved.

Love also becomes too scarce to go around. Married couples need each other's emotional, physical and psychological support for day-to-day survival. When this is lacking or divided, as is the case in some polygamous marriages, it may psychologically traumatize the affected spouse even if they do not publicly display it. From the FGDs, it emerged that some women in polygamous marriages resorted to extramarital affairs and seeking out the companionship and support of other men. In one sense, the polygamous situation facilitated women's likelihood to stand up for their rights and take action, but simultaneously increased her and her family's risk of HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The sharing of partners in polygamous marriages, combined with extramarital affairs, easily passes sexual diseases to all the affected parties. Although both older and younger women were subjected to similar conditions in polygamous marriages, younger women were more likely to engage in extramarital affairs, implying that age plays a key role in the stability of polygamous marriages.

The challenge is how to sensitize people in villages regarding how to reduce the risks of infection transmission to their unsuspecting partners. Interestingly, polygamists justified polygamous marriages over monogamous ones because they thought monogamy provided fertile ground for promiscuity and multiple partners outside marriage. They argued that men

in polygamous marriages are more honest and open in their relationships compared to the men in monogamous marriages, who were believed to be cheating more. They further stated that 'a man cannot be satisfied by one woman'; using the metaphor of a diet, they defended it by saying 'there is no way one can be eating beans everyday' (Ministry of Education 2003e: 26).

There is a clear preference for polygamy in rural villages compared to urban areas, probably due to the influence of modernization. As a practice it is likely to continue putting people at risk unless all parties stop having extramarital affairs. In Sinazongwe and Namwala (Muchila Village), women complained that the wait for their turn to be with their husbands was too long, pushing some to find alternative partners to provide companionship and basic needs. A group of older women in Muchila said polygamy was a major cause of women embarking on extramarital affairs because women in those relationships were not well treated and never satisfied emotionally (or otherwise).

The practice of polygamy is strongly embedded in the Tonga construction of masculinity. It is assumed here that due to masculinities, males get what they want through consensus or other means – hence the existence of sexual and other forms of violence against women in the community. Patriarchal and sexist cultures tend to hold women at ransom. In order to bring about better relations between women and men, there is a need to re-examine these constructs of masculinity. One of the earliest feminist theorists, John Stuart Mills, suggested:

The principle, which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes – the legal subordination of one sex to the other – is wrong in itself, and one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and ... it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no

power or privilege on one side, nor disability on the other.
(Kimmel 2004: 289)

In a study examining the role of masculinities, Bujra (2002) brings up the different forms of masculinity in AIDS discourse, outlining ways in which men's power manifests itself in discursive, material, institutional or cultural forms. She posits that women in Africa may subscribe to a discourse that denies wives the right to refuse sex to husbands, but they do this in the knowledge of men's social power – their socially sanctioned violence and control over the means of survival (Cleaver 2002).

Polygamy further affirms stereotypes relating to masculinity and femininity. The cult of true womanhood, with all its attributes, seems to fit the system. Welter (1966) pointed out that 'the attributes of true womanhood, by which a woman judged herself and was judged by her husband, neighbours and society could be divided into four cardinal virtues: piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity', without which no woman's life could have real meaning (cited in Brannon 2008: 313). Some stereotypes, such as submissiveness, could be harmful when internalized by women, especially in the context of HIV/AIDS.

Further socialization in Zambia makes women lose control over their lives because they are taught to be obedient and submissive to males, especially those commanding power in their lives, such as fathers, husbands, uncles and elder brothers (National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council 2003). This makes it easy for women to accept polygamous relations as normal, because the men in their lives have said it is an acceptable practice.

Another negative consequence of polygamy is multiple women being left as widows following a husband's death. Several women in polygamous relationships reported that work overload resulted in constant complaints about exhaustion and poor health among the wives. This was due to their

extensive involvement in agricultural production as well as domestic and community activities. Although women were at the forefront of agricultural work, the land they tilled remained their husband's property and, in cases of death, such property reverted to the husband's family (Ministry of Education 2004b).

However, in spite of the negative connotations of polygamy, the system's advantages may outweigh them. New findings about fewer occurrences of HIV and STIs among people in polygamous marriages might open the door for more polygamous unions, as long as it is understood that risk factors increase as soon as those involved begin outside relationships.

Tit for Tat: What About Polygamous Women (Lubambo)?

Polygamy in Southern Province is not just a male practice. There were also reports of some women polygamists and some argued that this practice was extended to women when it suited male partners (that is, if there was a pressing reason for it), such as the need for a wife to have children when the husband was impotent, in order to avoid stigmatization. Other circumstances precipitating the practice were when the man had a younger sexually active wife whom he could not satisfy sexually. In such cases, men would agree to exchange their wives as sexual partners or to contract another man to offer his services to the wife. This was aimed at reducing promiscuity among women as one respondent said it: 'better the devil you know does it than the one you do not know' (Ministry of Education 2005c: 21; Ministry of Education 2004a). It also occurred when a man wanted to formalize an adulterous affair with another man's wife. By disclosing the affair to the husband, he would be charged a cow or be granted freedom to visit the couple's home any time or take the wife out for sex. Settlement of the fine gave the second husband rights over the woman.

On the other hand, some women were using the *lubambo* system to their advantage and ensuring that it benefited them. Women reported that they knew some women polygamists who were being taken to Monze town for entertainment by their second husbands. In addition, male youths in Banakaila also reported the existence of *lubambo*, adding that it was not a secret and everyone in the village knew about it (Ministry of Education 2005c). The fact that it was an open, recognized system gave women a lot of bargaining power in terms of decision-making and economic contribution to the homestead. In this case, *lubambo* is significant in reversing and balancing power relations.

The practice was reported to prevail predominantly among intergenerational marriages where older men could not sexually satisfy their younger wives. In some instances, men paid several heads of cattle in order to gain sexual rights to another man's wife. However, there were cases in which the women got involved in *lubambo* to improve the family's economic status or further extend their power, as they held the key to the success of such polygamous agreements (Ministry of Education 2005c). Although it was possible for younger women to use *lubambo* for their own benefits, prevailing gender relations were such that a woman could go into a *lubambo* polygamous marriage through her husband sanctioning it; negotiation skills were thus a prerequisite for it to occur. This exercise of power by women in *lubambo* can be interpreted as a demonstration of freedom to make decisions over their well-being and interests. This is in line with Colson's argument (2006) that Tonga women and men share relative autonomy and that women have general control over vital resources as well as their labour. Hence they are regarded as persons in their own right.

Beliefs and Practices Related to Death and its Aftermath

Tonga have systematic traditions that attempt to deal with the welfare of the spouse after the death of a partner. Because of prevailing power relations and gender roles, these seem to affect women more than men. They are designed to help the surviving woman cope with the loss – psychologically and physically – of her husband's death and to enable her to move on with life with the support of the late husband's family. Issues related to holistic well-being – such as economics, social standing, and the psychological health of the widow and her children – were considered in developing these rituals. Pertinent practices as related to HIV/AIDS included sexual cleansing of the widow (*kusalazya*) and widow inheritance (*kunjilila mung'anda*).

Sexual cleansing as a practice in contemporary Southern Province epitomizes the conflict between customary laws and practices, and those of modern national constitutional law, as well as international rights, practices and norms. According to study respondents, sexual cleansing was one of the major traditional or cultural practices among the Tonga designed to provide support through existing family structures. Through this, a widow would be inherited by her in-laws after she has had sex with one of the late husband's brothers or another designated male relative. More often than not, women are pressured to engage in this ritualistic journey without regard to the current risk of HIV/AIDS or their own spiritual beliefs. No HIV or STI tests are done prior to the rituals. Furthermore, the use of condoms is not permitted. In Namateba Village, a woman becomes even more vulnerable once sexually cleansed as more men approach her for sex saying '*kayi wakasalala*', meaning 'she has been cleansed', and is therefore safe to have sex with (Ministry of Education 2005c)!

Although unwritten like other customary practices, the application of sexual cleansing appears to be forceful and compulsory. The community at large shuns a widow who has not undergone the ritual. The practice is attached to the belief that by engaging in sexual cleansing, the widow is freed from the husband's ghost and that she will not suffer from mental illness (*chibinde*) even if she becomes involved with other men. The Tonga believe that if someone is not sexually cleansed, they run the risk of going insane or dying early due to bad omens inflicted by the deceased man's ghost, especially if they have affairs with other men. These are very strongly held beliefs that bring in complexities of trying to relate to both the physical and the spirit world.

Although issues related to women's rights and control over their own sexuality were not discussed, it is believed that the Tonga women do have relative autonomy and hence are able to decide what is best for themselves. In some cases, though, if a woman refuses to comply with the ritual, she is penalized, chased away from the husband's homestead and dispossessed of all property, forcing her to leave and start her life anew elsewhere. Because of the fear of such punitive measures and due to the fact that most women are not economically empowered, the majority of widows undertake the risks associated with the ritual so that they can be inherited and have a secure future life. Many also do it because they believe in it.

Field evidence shows that some young male relatives who are supposed to inherit the widow also favour the practice and may even fight over who is to cleanse and inherit the woman. The advice of witch doctors is often sought in order to diffuse family tension related to determining which man's right it is to cleanse and inherit. This is because, in addition to inheriting the widow, the male relative also inherits the estate of the deceased, including his cattle. In Sinazongwe, it

was recounted how two brothers fought to cleanse a brother's widow: both of them went to consult the witch doctor but while there, one left the room as if going to the toilet and ran back to the village, where he proceeded to sexually cleanse the widow and hence became the rightful heir (Ministry of Education 2003e). In the Namateba village of Monze, men reported that they were not worried about the dangers of sexual cleansing in relation to HIV because their foremost concern was cattle inheritance. One headman confirmed this, saying 'we Tonga are more interested in cattle inheritance than wife inheritance' (Ministry of Education 2003c: 18).

The importance of owning animals as an investment and symbol of wealth among the Tonga (even in contemporary times) is discussed in *Grains from Grass*, where Cliggett (2005) highlights the linking of cattle wealth to issues such as security for financial emergencies not offered by a regular income. Moreover, access to cattle wealth is also linked to gender and age variables: older men will likely have accumulated more cattle than women because of bride prices, from which the fathers get a bigger share, as well as men's access to wage-earning jobs which give them money to procure more cattle. It is not surprising therefore when younger men fight to inherit a widow because they know that such inheritance brings about a major change in their socio-economic status.

Due to the advent of AIDS, community sensitization has been done in many villages by non-governmental, church and government organizations. Consequently some changes have been instituted in parts of the province under the leadership and encouragement of some chiefs. One new form of non-sexual cleansing that has emerged (*kuchuta*) involves the use of the blood from a goat or rooster. The man inheriting her rolls the blood over the widow's body in order to take the husband's spirit out. Another form involves the husband's brother rubbing his genitals against the widow without the actual sex

act. Fines and by-laws had to be passed by chiefs to convince people to stop sexual cleansing and adopt the new, safer forms. Chief Sinazongwe, as the chair of the district HIV and AIDS task force, was particularly adamant about instituting changes. He introduced a 1.5 million kwacha fine on any villager found practising sexual cleansing, justifying it by saying that with the advent of HIV/AIDS, his people would be wiped out by the pandemic if the practice was not stopped ('Zambia: AIDS Crisis' 2003).

However, due to strong beliefs about the ritual and role of sexual cleansing, some women do not agree to non-sexual methods. They go to the extent of arranging to have the real sexual cleansing secretly administered (Ministry of Education 2003b, 2003c, 2004b, 2005b, 2005c). Many Tonga seem to be more scared of mental illness (*chibinde*) than the threat of HIV. Sometimes, failure to execute the sexual cleansing attracts a fine from the widow's family to their in-laws in the form of a cow. In some cases, when sexual cleansing is not performed, the widow's family accuses the deceased's family of hiding the true cause of death of the man and concluding that it was related to AIDS. Influenced by their cultural beliefs and traditions, women and men are still opting for the old risky practices despite the option of safe alternatives (Ministry of Education 2004b).

The customary practice of widow inheritance (*kunjilila mung'anda*) is closely associated with sexual cleansing. Inheritance happens after the cleansing without any prior checks related to the medical status of the man or woman, thus putting both at risk. The practice is justified as a holistic ritual designed to take care of the widow's economic, social and spiritual well-being, and to ensure that the children have a home and a father to take care of their needs. In this sense, nobody would be destitute following the death of a husband or father. Because of these positive aspects, inheritance

continues despite the risks that HIV poses (Ministry of Education 2003c).

Sex Culture, Sexual Networks and Extramarital Affairs (*bumambe*)

Among Tonga men it is common to hear them justifying the sex culture, sex networks and extramarital affairs by saying '*mbocibede, mbotwakalengwa*', meaning 'it is natural and that is the way we were created'. Male domination over different aspects of life is a norm in Southern Province. This is due to strong cultural connections and socialization shaping male and female relationships and reinforcing unequal gender relations. Cultural factors and patriarchy have been cited as obstacles to women's political emancipation and promotion of equal rights; that is why the CEDAW and MDGs have placed emphasis on strategies to bring about changes in the cultural arena. Women's traditional roles as wives, mothers and community managers have kept them in the private sphere, where they have very little power in relation to men, who dominate the public sphere. These attitudes transfer to the way women are treated in their homes and community at large: men continue to be decision makers and women have little power, even over issues that affect their bodies directly, such as sexual decisions regarding when and with whom to have sex. This inability to negotiate sexual decisions makes women vulnerable to infections. They cannot argue for protected sex or refuse it without attracting other forms of abuse or harassment.

Women's relationships with men, particularly in the rural areas of the province, are made worse by a sex culture where women are viewed as providers of sex on demand. One could argue they are used as sex objects. However, due to their

socialization, women do not conceive of themselves that way but rather view themselves in a positive light as being supportive to their husband. They have been socialized not to refuse sex with their husbands or partners, even when they know that the men have affairs with other women, or are suspected to have HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Declining sex is a taboo that defies some of the critical teachings of their initiation. The teachings of initiation focus in part on what makes a 'good wife', including qualities that encourage submissiveness, obedience and giving pleasure to a husband through sex. Nkunika et al. (1998: 231–32) explained in their study on cultural dimensions as determinants of behaviour among the Tonga of Southern province that 'in this society, virility, well-being, wealth and prosperity are measured through, *inter alia*, polygamy, many children, dowries and other sexual exploits outside marriage'. They posited that 'through these practices, gender-insensitive environments are created where women and girls have very little say in men's behaviour and are consequently exposed to AIDS, situations where they are powerless and vulnerable sexually (*ibid.*: 232). The National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Intervention Strategic Plan identified similar issues and arguments (National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Council 2003).

Extramarital affairs (*bumambe*) are seen as a normal part of life and accepted. Women will not leave their partners or react negatively because of them. While there may be teachings and taboos about extramarital affairs, what actually occurs on the ground demonstrates the contrary. The practice of multiple partners is closely related to the concept of sexual networking, which refers to the cultivation of multiple sexual relationships in a variety of environments. Sexual networking is commonly accepted for men by the communities in which it exists, and as a practice further underscores the subordination of women.

This intersects with the issue of power and women's inability to make their own decisions related to sex. According to an analysis by Baylies and Bujra (2000: 7), 'intimate relations involve prescriptions of relative passivity for females, and the according of sexual decision-making and initiative to men along with tolerance of men's greater sexual mobility both prior to and after marriage'.

This also has implications for women's lack of economic security and empowerment, which may force them to engage in some sexual ventures out of need or desperation, such as prostitutes who indulge in multiple sexual encounters for their livelihood. Indeed gender and power relations are a key component of how AIDS has impacted African societies; hence the importance of understanding how gender relations create vulnerabilities and the specific ways the epidemic has impacted women (*ibid.*).

In the rural research sites, the sex culture was very pronounced. According to one researcher's observations in Gwembe, 'everything in the rural community revolved around sex', among youths and elderly alike. Gendered patterns emerged. Young men spent much time discussing how to seduce girls, and the older generation of men (and also women) took pride in boys who had multiple partners and made girls pregnant (Ministry of Education 2004b, 2005b). Impregnating many girls implies that people are having unprotected sex, with multiple partners – which clearly has grave consequences for the spread of HIV and AIDS. Moreover most of the younger men were unable to settle the fees charged as damages for impregnating girls but continued their activities anyway.

In all the districts, extramarital affairs were mentioned as a common occurrence, for which no men apologized, again citing 'it is natural and that is the way we were created'. Female traders were often accused of contributing to men engaging in extramarital affairs because they were found to be appealing

sexually (Ministry of Education 2003c, 2003d, 2003e, 2004b, 2005c). One man in Mazabuka explained this thusly: '*Aba mba menshi, ba boneka mbuli mukuwa, a nsinga ila yenda kumulanga buyo*', which means 'these women look like white women – they are clean, braid their hair and by merely looking at them, you get aroused' (Ministry of Education 2005b: 26). In Namwala, there were reports of intergenerational extramarital affairs involving older men with young girls as well as older women with young men – these were both acceptable practices. One woman forcefully justified it, saying 'there is nothing wrong with extramarital affairs, even with married men, because in this area men are shared – that is natural'. It was further reported that some women deliberately engage in affairs to take revenge on cheating husbands (Ministry of Education 2005d) and to contribute to the cattle wealth of the family when they are caught with another man (who must then pay a fine of cattle). Both men and women had similar views about extramarital affairs.

As another part of the sex culture, both women and men made efforts to ensure that they enhanced sex. Women used herbs that act as drying agents to tighten and warm the vagina. They also tattooed parts of their bodies in an effort to attract men, and increase body temperature and sexual pleasure for their men. Both young and middle-aged men reported the use of herbs to boost their sexual prowess and stimulate sexual potency so they could have several sexual encounters. However, whereas men's efforts were done for themselves and to satisfy their egos, women's efforts were intended to please their partners. Some men in Gwembe said they did it to satisfy the women but it was only so that they did not gossip about them being weak.

According to local beliefs, the use of herbs encourages promiscuity among users because once one uses them they are aroused such that they need several partners. Also, herbs

put both women and men at an increased risk of contracting HIV or other sexually transmitted infections because dry sex causes microabrasions in the vagina. Furthermore, tattooing is risky because practitioners may be using the same razor blade on different clients. In Gwembe women reported that the tattooing procedure was performed by a herbalist to a group of women using the same unsterilized utensils for each (Ministry of Education 2004b).

Dynamic and Static Culture at a Crossroad

This paper alluded earlier to the dynamism of culture, traditional beliefs and practice. Of course, there are many positive and negative aspects of culture depending on who is making the judgment and for what purposes. Changes required to those things perceived to be negative are obvious, but positive aspects also need to be preserved and passed on. What happens when a crossroad is reached? Who or what determines how things will go, where and why? This must be approached with cultural sensitivity, communication, and the involvement of those affected by the culture practice. Some may appear archaic and harsh from the perspective of external agents, while those affected by it may see and value it differently. Polygamy as a family system, for example, seems to be making a statement that it is sustainable, while at the same time providing a risky environment for HIV transmission. Hence no laws have abolished or changed the system and it continues to flourish as a Tonga family trademark.

Sexual cleansing has attracted more than a fair share of discourse on what strategies should be adopted to transform it. The combined efforts of detractors and supporters of the practice, human-rights activists, religious groups, non-governmental organizations and traditional leaders have

resulted in open communication and dialogue on possible interventions for change. In many villages and chiefdoms, the practice has been outlawed. Through dialogue, people designed and many adopted non-sexual ways of cleansing the widows, all believed to work in terms of chasing away the deceased husband's ghost. However, some widows and prospective widow inheritors were at the forefront of defying such changes. This demonstrates the need for communication, participation, and consensus between women and men in designing interventions directed at reducing the spread of HIV. While the incidence of widow inheritance seems to be decreasing, rural women still have little or no say and for economic reasons may not be in a position to refuse to be inherited. Attitudes relating to sex culture, sexual networks and sex as a commodity may also need to be transformed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

By examining the intersections of gender, culture and HIV/AIDS among the Tonga of the Southern Province of Zambia, this paper discussed how culture affects men and women in differential manners. Findings show that some cultural practices and beliefs promote risky behaviour: polygamy, widow inheritance, sexual cleansing and extramarital affairs all have negative consequences in relation to the spread of HIV. They pose health risks to all people's lives but especially women's. This paper argued in part that women's gender roles result in certain constraints and an increased risk of danger due to pressure to abide by cultural expectations.

Promotion of gender equality in traditional village settings is challenging. Although regional and national policy frameworks have been put in place, they have not achieved much in terms of tilting the gender balance or mainstreaming

gender perspectives in the cultural arena. Ongoing sensitization, advocacy and community mobilization strategies must facilitate attitudinal and behavioural changes so that men and women can be treated as partners. If the current trend is to be transformed, some cultural practices and values need to be reviewed and addressed from a gendered perspective.

Jackson (2002) states that culture, tradition, beliefs and values are dynamic, change over time, and can be influenced in positive ways through sensitive approaches that promote participation, communication and dialogue. It is recommended, therefore, that some of these cultural practices be modified so that they are gender friendly (rather than life threatening as they currently are in the context of HIV/AIDS). This can only be achieved if continuous advocacy, communication, community sensitization and mobilization are systematically implemented to ensure dialogue on these issues in the province. The role of chiefs, village heads, churches and non-governmental organizations will be critical in such processes. There is great need for consensus and the blessing of the traditional leaders who are the custodians of traditional and cultural practices, and both women and men must be targeted in order to bring about any transformation. Changes must be based on socio-cultural research in the field that establishes the risk factors and investigates what is required to transform them while retaining their essence. It is also critical for communities and researchers to explore ways of addressing unequal gender and power relations as part of the strategy for dealing with the AIDS epidemic. This will require a different type of education for women.

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CHAPTER IX

Losing the Commons – Fighting with Magic: Institutional Change, Fortress Conservation and Livelihood Strategies of the Batwa, Kafue Flats Floodplain, Zambia

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Abstract

This paper deals with institutional change regarding the management of common pool resources (CPRs, such as fisheries and wildlife) in the Kafue Flats, a floodplain in Zambia. This change is analysed in the context of conservation ideology of a weak state and the marginalization of the Batwa, a local autochthonous fishery group. It draws on the theoretical framework of the 'New Institutionalism' (Ensminger 1992) and argues that external and internal institutional changes not only lead to overuse of CPRs but also to socio-cultural change.

In the case of the Batwa, the state has dismantled local CPR-management institutions whilst itself being unable to monitor fish and wildlife. This open-access situation attracts seasonally immigrating fishermen and hunters, which

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consequently contributes to the overuse of CPRs. The Lochinvar National Park poses another problem as it encloses a large portion of previously used territories and is perceived as fortress conservation by the Batwa. Additionally, their livelihoods are questioned by immigrant people, who consider the Batwa to be backward. These constellations result in the loss of the commons for local people. Additionally, immigrants question the very way in which the Batwa live. While younger men try to adapt to the dominant discourse of modernity, elderly people refer to traditional values: some Batwa are seen as sorcerers controlling dangerous hippos or crocodiles. As accidents with such animals happen from time to time, some of the Batwa get the impression they are regaining power over immigrants and therefore regaining power over CPRs, which they have actually lost.

Introduction and Theoretical Background

Institutional change of access to common pool resources (CPRs) is closely intertwined with social change and concepts of ethnic identity. During colonial times the Kafue Flats were opened for commercial fisheries and traditional institutional regulations of access were dismantled, leading to further degradation of CPRs. By allowing immigration and implementing new (but inefficient) formal state institutions a *de facto* open-access situation was created. While some aspects of the Batwa identity serve to undermine their authority, others support them. Today, the Batwa identity can be partially understood in the interaction with commercial fishermen, who stigmatize the Batwa for their primitiveness, while at the same time fearing their magical prowess.

In societies where livelihoods depend strongly on common pool resources (CPRs), social change and access in light of

changing institutions are closely intertwined. There are few authenticated reports of how the institutional change of access to CPRs transformed norms and identities. We argue in this paper that the institutional change of CPR use depends upon and causes changes of ethnic identity. We additionally argue that the strategic use of specific ideologies and identities that are adapted to certain situations may seem to raise the bargaining power (Ensminger 1992) of an otherwise powerless marginalized and stigmatized group. It is a weapon of the weak (Scott 1985), by which ethnic identity is emphasized. In the same vein, local marginalized people tend to see the state in a very differentiated way: in the case of the Kafue Flats fisheries, the Batwa would seek help from the Department of Fisheries regarding fishery matters in the National Park, where they feel themselves faced with harassment from the Zambian wildlife department.

The study of CPRs, institutions and state involvement has, since the work of Hardin (1968), created an immense literature. Among the most influential scholars have been Elinor Ostrom (1990; Becker and Ostrom 1995; Ostrom et al. 2002), McKean (2000), James Acheson (1989, 2003) and Jean Ensminger (1992; Ensminger and Knight 1997). Their approaches can be seen in the framework of the New Institutionalism in economics, anthropology and political science (Haller 2002a, 2002b, 2007, 2010). Generally, if institutions work well they reduce transaction costs. In the use of CPRs there would be clear expectations regarding who is using them, when and under what conditions. Additionally, there would be understandings with respect to monitoring, and how misuse is sanctioned.

In theory, as well as in practice, it is believed that when the state wields exclusive control over CPRs taken from the local level, this can lead to the problem of *de facto* open access, 'prisoner's dilemma' constellation and consecutive decline of resources such as fisheries (Ostrom et al. 2002: 13f.). Such change

in institutions, such as changes in property rights, has a strong impact on natural resources as well as on the societies dependant upon them. It is often unclear how changing power relations, social norms and institutions, and the accessibility to resources depend upon each other, and how they affect ethnic identity. Using the New Institutional approach developed by Jean Ensminger – based on North’s notion of institutions (1990) – we argue that institutional change stems from external changes (political-institutional, economic, environmental, demographic and technological changes). These have an impact on relative prices for goods and services (the price of one item related to other goods and services). These economic changes in turn influence internal constellations of local groups such as institutions, organization, ideology (the way to explain and justify action) and bargaining power (Haller 2010). We will argue that external changes have increased relative prices for fish and wildlife in Zambia in a way that makes them very attractive to outsiders, who immigrate to the Batwa area and that of their neighbouring Ila/Balundwe agro-pastoralists. After the decline of prices for copper between 1975 and 2003, and the consequential lose of revenue, the state of Zambia dismantled its local institutions and does not have the means to pay employees acceptable wages. Thus formal institutions such as wildlife and fishery laws cannot be operated (Gibson 1999; Haller and Merten 2008, 2010; Haller and Chabwela 2009; Haller 2013). At the same time as prices for minerals, wages and main agricultural products have stagnated or only slightly increased, the prices for fish and wildlife have risen tremendously.³ Therefore, the interest in

3. Haller (2013) has shown that fish and game have increased in price between seventeen and twenty times from 1980 to 2000–02, while prices for copper have been decreasing. Wages for low-level Fishery Department staff have only increased three times while prices for maize, the major staple food crop, have only increased nine times.

commercial fisheries and hunting, as well as trade with these products, is high for many people in Zambia, while costs for access are low due to the lack of state enforcement and the dismantling of local institutions. The area therefore faces a *de facto* open-access situation (Haller and Merten 2008, 2010; Haller 2013). Interestingly, however, immigrants refer to state law in order to challenge local critique of use of CPRs, but with a lack of state presence they are not forced to act in accordance with that state law. This situation creates tensions with local people who see powerful outsiders making commercial gains through exploitation of the local commons. Local people are stigmatized as being out of touch with modern-day life and this too diminishes their bargaining power. The only supporting argument is situational action, making reference to ancestral spirits and magic by local individuals. Another strategy of local marginal actors is to draw on and manipulate ideologies from different government departments (e.g. Department of Fisheries vs Department of Wildlife), from which they may expect support (Haller and Merten 2010).

The data presented here were gathered in a one-year fieldwork period among the Ila, Tonga (Balundwe) and Batwa between 2002 and 2004. We used participant observation as well as household surveys in the Nalubamba and Hamusonde chiefdoms (ten villages, 260 households) and structured as well as semi-structured questionnaires and interviews. We also did archive research and conducted a series of interviews with officials and specialists in the area. This paper presents data from a larger research project examining the impact of institutional change on CPR management from pre-colonial times up to the present among the Ila, Tonga and Batwa of the Kafue Flats (Haller and Merten 2008, 2010; Haller 2013), and issues regarding food security, health and nutrition (Merten 2008; Merten and Haller 2007, 2008). The paper investigates change among the Batwa, an autochthonous and marginal fishing community in the Kafue Flats in the Southern

Province of Zambia. It will look at three aspects. First, that change of institutions for the management of CPRs and fostering open access leads to the loss of the commons (fisheries and wildlife) for the Batwa and to their stigmatized position as an autochthonous group. This has a major impact on their livelihoods and on the way they perceive the common pool resource they once controlled. Second, that state regulation of protected areas based on the fortress approach, despite participative measures, leads to serious complaints linked to livelihood issues and to the demand for control by the Department of Fisheries within the Wildlife department. Third, we argue that the Batwa, in specific moments, try to use the ideology of ancestral spirits and magic connected to wild animal attacks on commercial fishermen to regain control. This pertains to the notion of bargaining power and ideology as used by theorists in New Institutionalism. We argue here that the notion of the 'weapon of the weak' and the so-called 'hidden transcript' that marginalized actors take up are important instruments in their struggle for resistance (Scott 1985; Haller and Merten 2010), even if they are used only in specific situations.

Batwa Fishermen and the Setting of the Kafue Flats

The Batwa or Twa of the Kafue Flats are a small autochthonous group living on the shores of the Kafue River in Zambia and are by no means related to the same named groups in the Central African Rainforest. The Kafue Flats is a floodplain built by the Kafue River as it flows from the western Province southward through the Copperbelt. This second largest river of Zambia meanders on through the high plain (1000 m above sea level), which has a very low flowing gradient. The Kafue Flats has many oxbow lakes, river arms, lagoons and ponds. Southern Province is a semi-arid region with only 800 mm

rainfall per annum, but the large amount of water that the Kafue River brings with it in the rainy season, combined with the local rainfall and the flatness of the area, leads to flooding. The Kafue Flats cover between 6500 and 7000 km², 3000 to 5000 km² of which are inundated with water between January and April. As the floods recede, they leave behind lush pastures, which are extensively used by the Ila and Tonga agro-pastoralists in the dry season. This seasonal flooding supplies a rich environment for forty mammal wildlife species (including the endemic semi-aquatic Kafue Lechwe (*leche kafuensis*), zebras, buffalo and hippos), large reptiles (the Nile crocodile), sixty-seven species of fish – including bream (*tilapia, oreochromis*) and catfish (*clarias*) – and more than six hundred species of birds (many water birds such as the Waddled Crane and partly migratory birds from Europe), which have adapted to the inundation pattern. The Kafue Flats is home to three national parks (Kafue, Blue Lagoon and Lochinvar) and the surrounding areas are within the Game Management Area regime (GMA 11). The World Conservation Union (IUCN) and RAMSAR view the Kafue Flats as one of the major wetland areas in Africa that must be protected (Smith and Dale 1968: 68; Fielder 1973; Muyanga and Chipundu 1982; Hughes and Hughes 1992: 758; Chabwela 1992; Ellenbroek 1987; Chooye and Drijver 1995; Haller and Merten 2010; Haller 2013).

The Batwa are regarded as the original inhabitants and traditional fishermen and hunters of the Kafue River and the surrounding areas of Southern Zambia. They number about one thousand. Some individuals physically resemble the bushmen of Southern Africa; others resemble the local Ila or Tonga herdsman, their neighbours in the Kafue Flats, with whom they intermarry. Not much is known of the Batwa. The early ethnographers of the Ila, the missionary Edwin Smith and the Administrator of the British South Africa Company Sir Andrew Dale only briefly mentioned this group (Smith and Dale 1968), recording their

distribution on maps. It is difficult to say how many Batwa still exist because their villages on the riverbanks are not easily accessible. A census taken in the 1970s by Everett shows 1262 people owning boats, with an average household size of five people, which gives approximately 6300 living in sixteen permanent settlements. The British Colonial Government mentioned around six thousand people. Current accounts estimate about two hundred households, consisting of around one thousand people, in the Kafue Flats (Lehmann 1977; Haller and Merten 2010; Haller 2013).

There are different theories explaining the origins of the Batwa, some of them linking the Batwa to long-ago immigration of hunter and gatherer groups, others to outcasts from neighbouring groups looking for refuge in the swamps. According to a local informant who could retrace his ancestry over ten generations, one of the most important permanent settlements of the Batwa, called Nyimba, close to the Kafue River and Lochinvar National Park was founded only about two hundred to three hundred years ago (Haller 2013).

A centralized political power structure does not exist in Batwa society, which is organized in patrilineal segmentary groups based on control by village elders. These coordinate activities such as fishing, and also have limited power in conflict resolution (Haller 2013). In the colonial times of the British South African Company at the end of the nineteenth century, chiefs were appointed to the Ila, the Tonga and the Batwa. The British later reorganized the chiefdoms but the Batwa were put under the control of a different chief from the Ila and Tonga chiefs north and south of the Kafue River (*ibid.*; Lehmann 1977). Batwa religion recognizes a series of ancestral spirits called *mizhimo*, the same term used by their Ila/Balundwe neighbours (Haller 2013). These spirits are important guardians of access to an area, a right they give to the living in return for the assurance that specific rituals are performed. Otherwise catches

may be low and attacks by crocodiles and hippos may occur. The belief in magic is of crucial importance, as individuals who are believed to have the ability to control dangerous animals are feared, as they may use this power against people not abiding to rules and regulations, especially where fishing rights are involved (Haller 2007, see below).

Today, whilst the total immigrant population has increased, the Batwa face poverty. They are confronted with problems similar to many politically marginalized groups around the world who fight for a better life whilst claiming for themselves their 'indigenous' identity. They are not recognized as a separate political entity but submitted under different chiefdoms. On the one hand this allows the Batwa some autonomy but they cannot claim security and have difficulties attaining access to medical treatment and relief food during times of natural disasters, such as the famine of 2002 (own research). Their bargaining power is, however, limited as their number is small compared to other ethnic groups of fishing people living close to them. They also do not have a lobby in national politics, which would be capable of applying pressure.

Apart from the political constraints, there are a lot of man-made environmental changes that have taken place over the last thirty years. The national electricity company ZESCO built two dams in the 1970s, one at Kafue Gorge (1972) and a second at Itzhi-Tezhi (1977–78), in order to regulate the flows and to minimize the impact of the man-made lake behind Kafue Gorge (Chabwela 1992: 12; Chooye and Drijver 1995: 139). The consequences for the local communities in the Kafue Flats are costly: the wet season has become drier – with considerably less precipitation in drier years (Chooye and Drijver 1995: 139) – and the dry season wetter; vegetation cover has changed (increase in woodland); and pastures have been lost, with some of the pasture areas flooded in the dry season. There has been an increase in weed growth (especially the thorny *mimosa*

pigra), cattle herders have to walk greater distances, and fields and settlements close to the river are also inundated in the dry season.⁴ Often water is released, without forewarning the people living on the river's edge. The subsequent sudden rise in the water level creates many problems: cattle herders of the Ila and Tonga have problems with their animals and as the water flows faster, catches for fishermen are lower. In other areas the increased amounts of water in the dry season leads to greater levels of inundation and more fish. Consequently, this makes these locations, such as Chunga Lagoon, attractive for immigrant commercial fishermen, who move in from the east and the west of the floodplain. Pre-impoundment studies foresaw a general increase of fish owing to larger areas being submerged by the Kafue Gorge Dam. After the second dam was built, flooding became even more unpredictable (Subramaniam 1992). As flooding is related to fish productivity (*ibid.*), any change is seen as having a direct impact on the amount of fish caught.⁵

A decline in Zambia's state revenues – especially those from copper, which has experienced a drastic price reduction since 1974–75 – has drastically affected the area. Since Zambia is

4. This information comes from different sources and has still to be confirmed with the analysis of satellite pictures. Some work has been done by Drijver and Marchand (1985). Information can also be found in Chabwela (1992) and new research is being undertaken by Musonda Mumba, a doctoral candidate in the Wetlands Research Unit, Department Of Geography, University College London on *mimosa pigra*. In addition, a number of qualitative statements have been collected by the authors in the field (through focus groups, interviews, biographies, environment-related oral histories and also by walking through the territory of Mbeza with local people).
5. This is based on our own research (2002–03). We gathered information on this issue from local people, fishery officers in Mazabuka, Monze and Namwala, and local white farmers in the Kafue Flats area.

still dependant to a large degree on external revenues from copper, it is faced with serious structural adjustment programmes imposed by the IMF and the World Bank. As the terms of these could not be fulfilled by either Kenneth Kaunda or Frederick Chiluba in the 1980s and 1990s, cutbacks in the formal sector were the logical consequence (Gibson 1999; Haller and Merten 2006, 2008, 2010; Haller 2013). Many people from the urban areas moved into the commercial fisheries in the areas close to Lusaka, which became the 'first informal sector in Zambian economy' (Scudder 2003). The proposed privatization schemes by the Bretton Woods organizations could not halt the downfall. On the contrary, these programmes have contributed to the fishery sector's move from the formal to the informal sector, as has the fact that state revenues did not allow for the Department of Fisheries to take adequate measures to address the downfall. Less money was available for equipment, staff and research (based on information from fishery staff from Mazabuka, Monze and Namwala). This problematic constellation continued under President Chiluba's privatization schemes and during the anti-corruption campaigns under the subsequent regime of President Mwanawasa. The same is true in the wildlife sector (Gibson 1999; Haller and Merten 2010; Chabwela and Haller 2010; Haller 2013). Due to economic decline, the formally centralized wildlife department has been weakened and poaching has become a serious problem in the entire country. Since local people still see the wild animals as being the property of the state, not even participative measures with a model of profit-sharing, called ADMARE, which were introduced in the 1990s (see Gibson 1999; Hulme and Murphree 2001; Chabwela and Haller 2010; Haller and Merten 2010; Haller 2013), could halt this process. As the state is unable to monitor the area, immigrants and local people are attracted for poaching. But while external poachers take the larger share and bribe scouts, local people are blamed for decreasing

wildlife numbers and subsequently suffer loss of access to major resource areas due to a fortress conservation approach (for more information about fortress conservation, see Hulme and Murphree 2001; Brockington 2003; Galvin and Haller 2008).

Traditional Livelihoods in Historic and Religious Perspective

The Batwa see themselves as the autochthonous fishermen and hunters of the area and claim both controlled fishing areas in the Kafue River and exclusive fishing rights close to the river in lagoons. These claims were recorded in the first Namwala District Notebooks of the colonial administration. Every group had a specific section or area, which it defended against intruders. These claims to certain stretches of the Kafue River were never challenged and were accepted by the later immigrating Ila and Tonga people, who were grazing their cattle on the lush grass in the floodplain close to the Kafue River and who compensated Batwa ritual masters for protecting the cattle from crocodiles during the river crossings necessary to reach the pastures on the north bank of the Kafue (Lehmann 1977: 42; Haller 2013).

Smith and Dale (1968) speak of similar claims for ponds among the Ila, who legitimize their 'spiritual ownership' by referring to ancestral spirits (*mizhimo*). This also applies to Batwa communal ownership of river sections, tributaries and ponds, which are controlled by the ancestral spirits to whom the Batwa would pray before going fishing. Economically, fishing is the most important activity for the Batwa, and was traditionally carried out with the use of boats and spears for subsistence. Some fish was bartered for milk from the Ila herders who came to the nearby cattle camps in the dry season. Nets were not used and were only later introduced by the

immigrant Lozi fishermen. The Batwa were famous for their peculiar form of shadow fishing, whereby they stretched a cloth tent from the high watergrass on to the boats in order to cast a shadow. The shadow attracted the fish, which were subsequently speared. This fishing technique is found exclusively among the Batwa fishermen. (MacLaren 1974; Haller and Merten 2010; Haller 2013).

Animistic religion plays an important role in the pre-colonial fishing institutions governing the use of this common pool resource. Before fishing can commence, male and female ancestral spirits (*mizhimo*) are ritually pacified and worshipped. As outlined elsewhere this helps the coordination of collective fishing activities and is part of the institutional design (similar to the Ila fishing institutions), to which Ostrom's design principles for robust institutions for sustainable use can be assigned (Ostrom 1990; Haller and Merten 2008, 2010; Haller and Chabwela 2009; Haller 2013). Animistic religion also plays a crucial role in the control of the fisheries in river sections, lagoons, tributaries and ponds. During the spawning period in the rainy season, the fish prefer certain locations close to the settlement of Nyimba, for example at the tributary *Nampongwe* (a place called Hippo Corner), which the Batwa believe to be protected by the underwater spirits of sacrificed women. They also believe that fishing in the off season between December and February in these places, when bream (*tilapia*) and other fish are spawning, is taboo (*tonda*). Acting against this taboo provokes the ancestral spirits and as a consequence catches are low. There is also the fear that the ancestors may instigate crocodile and hippo attacks on the perpetrators. So certain important areas are not fished during spawning times. Following the New Institutional approach one could argue that local fishery institutions embedded in religious beliefs served considerably to reduce transaction costs because they included information on users, monitoring and sanctioning aspects, as

well as additional aspects of Ostrom's design principles (1990).

But the Batwa are hunters as well as fishermen, a fact not recognized by today's authorities. As with fisheries, hunting was also embedded in an institutional setting, which organized the hunt on lechwe antelopes and the distribution of meat and skins. In addition to individual hunting in specified areas, once a year the Batwa took part in collective hunts (*chila*) with the neighbouring Ila and Tonga people (local groups from territorial areas known as *chichi*) on the herds of the migratory lechwe antelope. Twice a year people from neighbouring territories invited by Kazoka, including the Batwa of Nyimba, would encircle the lechwe herds during a large hunt that lasted three days. Only on the second day, however, would large numbers of animals (between several hundred to one or two thousand) often be killed. Animals and skins would then be distributed among the people who participated. This guaranteed both the Batwa and the Ila-Tonga an ample supply of meat – which was subsequently dried – and skins. However, collective hunting was strictly regulated and coordinated. In the Nyimba area, control was in the hands of an Ila group called Kazoka, who reside today in the Nalubamba chiefdom, a territory (*chichi*) that is traditionally known as Mbeza. Hunting before or after a *chila* was strictly forbidden and sanctioned by the Kazoka group by a fine or, in some cases, even by death (Haller and Merten 2010; Haller 2013; Haller and Chabwela 2009; Chabwela and Haller 2010).

For the Batwa, fish and game are presumably the most important source of protein intake, whilst additional carbohydrates are collected from water lilies' tubers (*impana*, *nymphaea nouchali*), grains of wild rice (*muswenge*, *Oryza longistaminata*) and cultivated maize. The study of the floodplain ecosystem with its large-scale inundations close to the main riverbed explains why agriculture even today is only done on a small scale. The most permanent Batwa settlements can be found on the elevated land mainly at the confluence of a

tributary, where they are protected from the seasonal flooding. Farming and gardening on these lands is done marginally and would require labour-intensive irrigation in the dry season that would interfere with fishing (Haller 2013).

Change of CPR-Management Institutions

According to Lehmann (1977: 42), the colonial administrators created an open-access situation for the Kafue Flats because they proclaimed that fishing was free to all. The Pax Britannica allowed the Lozi, the former enemies of the Ila, Tonga and Batwa, commercial access to their fishing grounds. In other words, the colonial powers opened the CPRs and gave open access to the fisheries, in total disregard of the traditional fishing rights and CPR institutions. For this reason, and due to the constant losses they were incurring, the Batwa made several attempts to withdraw from colonial control, but had little or no bargaining power to defend their CPRs. In addition to this, as our own and others' research shows, the British placed restrictions on hunting and, in the 1950s, outlawed the *chila* (Rennie 1982), so the Batwa lost part of their subsistence during an early phase.

As previously stated, the economic decline of Zambia was in part responsible for the massive immigration to the area. People who once lived in the towns and Copperbelt now turned to commercial fisheries and fish trading, thus reducing the Batwa to a minority in their own territory. The example of Nyimba illustrates this: during our research in 2002 there were twenty named Batwa households compared to around 240 immigrant fishermen from other ethnic groups such as Lozi, Bemba, Nyasa and others. Local informants also reported that the Batwa of Nyimba had to house between forty and seventy seasonal fishermen per year from all over Zambia. The opening

of the fisheries, regardless of existing local CPR institutions, makes it near impossible for the Batwa to uphold their regulations. The immigrant fishermen are Christians and do not believe in religious taboos and ancestral spirits sanctioning the violation of traditional fishing regulations. Added to this problem was the increase in seasonal fishing camps during colonial and post-colonial times. Today there are seasonal camps with more than nine hundred households. There is an influx of people from urban areas, and areas to the east and west of the Kafue River such as Mazabuka and Kafue Town where, due to overfishing, catches have declined considerably (Haller and Merten, 2006, 2008, 2010; Haller 2013). This overexploitation started in the 1960s and continued through into the mid-1980s, when the fisheries were already classified as overexploited. These same fisheries were seen as virgin stock three decades ago (Subramaniam 1992). The Kafue Flats fisheries were and still are one of the most important fisheries for the capital Lusaka, delivering between seven and ten thousand metric tons (TMT) annually during the high times in the 1970s, though this fell to less than four TMT in the 1980s and 1990s. According to the official figures of the Department of Fisheries, catches have since increased to six TMT but local Fishery Department staff and local people estimate a figure which is much lower at between two and three TMT (Haller and Merten 2010; Haller 2013). In accounting for this, informants from local groups and staff of the local Department of Fisheries cite increased fishing activities, bad fishing techniques and violation of the breeding season ban, as well as droughts and irregular flooding.

In the seasonal fishing camps people live in huts constructed of only plastic and grass (grass is cut from the ground together with the earth, creating a natural grass-mat). There are no medical facilities, and no sanitation or infrastructure in the area. Garbage is scattered everywhere. The fish markets, one

of which is held twice weekly inside the Lochinvar National Park and the camps, attract fish traders from the capital Lusaka and the surrounding districts. There traders buy fish, which they sell in Lusaka (250 km away) at prices two to three times higher than cost price.

This rather uncontrolled situation happens despite the existence of formal state institutions that regulate today's fisheries. The Fishery Law of 1974 and the statutory amendments of 1986 clearly define the necessity for a fishing licence and set the limit for mesh sizes at no less than 76 mm. The fishing technique known as *kutumpula* (where a fish is driven with the sound of beating sticks on the water into the nets) is prohibited, as is fishing between December and February, months that are defined as closing times reserved for breeding (Haller and Merten 2010; Haller 2013).

Such regulations do not create a problem for the Batwa. But monitoring and sanctioning has become very difficult for the Department of Fisheries. Due to budget cuts, the state is left with insufficient funds to protect natural resources. Staff from the fishery departments in areas such as Mazabuka, Monze and Namwala are forced to sit in their offices instead of controlling licences, the mesh size of nets and closing times. Staffing is also an issue. For example, two fishery officers in the district of Mazabuka have to control a river section at least 80 km in length, which is too large for effective monitoring. In the other districts of the Kafue Flats the situation is no better (Haller and Merten 2008, 2010; Haller 2013).⁶ Since licences are cheap and fines disproportionate to the cash that can be earned for a good catch, fish stocks continue to fall. This is also a contributing factor when it comes to enforcing

6. Again, this information comes from research we conducted in 2002, interviewing staff from the fishery departments in Mazabuka, Monze and Namwala.

the formal fishery law. The Batwa, as well as the neighbouring Tonga and Ila people from the local chiefdoms, watch helplessly as their access to fish is reduced. At the same time the immigrants, as well as young Batwa, fish with nets of a very low mesh size, like *chukumpula* (shed cloth fishing), or are using other forbidden techniques such as *kutumpula*.

If the migratory fishermen would respect the local institutions regulating access, techniques and closing times for certain breeding areas based on worshipping local spirits, as well as the decisions of local leaders such as headmen, there would be fewer issues. The problem is that seasonal immigrants reject these rules, arguing that they too are Zambians and therefore have the right to fish. The Batwa are helpless in such situations, for in the context of the state only the state has the legitimacy to act against those who reject the rules. But local people wait for help in vain, as one Batwa man from Nyimba Village at the Kafue River puts it:

The problem is not that the immigrants are coming but that the people from the Fishery Department are not showing up. They shall come and control with what kind of nets these people are fishing. But they do not come!

Institutional Change in Wildlife Use

One of the biggest constraints for the Batwa – and one of their biggest complaints – is the Lochinvar National Park. This area was the cattle ranch of a white farmer between 1913 and 1965. In 1972 it was nationalized by the new independent government under Kaunda and turned into a National Park, giving protection to the herd of endemic lechwe antelope and a diversity of more than four hundred birds, including the Wattled Crane (Survey Department 1986; Chabwela 1992; Chooye and Drijver 1995). The

local people are aware of the importance of protected areas for endangered animals, but this has led to serious trouble for them, and especially for the Batwa. Hunting and fishing is prohibited in the park, but now part of their fishing areas lie inside the park's boundaries. Game scouts of the Zambian Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) control the area. ZAWA is a semi-privatized parastatal conservation organization that has inherited a participatory conservation programme called ADMADE (Gibson 1999; Chabwela and Haller 2010; Haller and Merten 2010; Haller 2013) from the old Wildlife Department. It is in charge of protecting wildlife in parks and the Game Management Areas (GMA) surrounding the park, but with notably less state funding than its predecessor. ZAWA is partially obliged to seek financial support from NGOs – such as the WWF – or others. The consequences of this privatization have led to a worsening of the situation in the park. As with the Department of Fisheries the agency lacks money for transport and infrastructure, without which adequate monitoring is not possible. In addition, the locals complain that if the scouts discover someone acting suspiciously, they are too quick to shoot. Because the scouts are underpaid they are said to be vulnerable to corruption (Chabwela and Haller 2010; Haller 2013). Third-party law enforcement is acceptable to the Batwa, but in the case of the fisheries they would rather deal with the people from the Department of Fisheries, as illustrated by the following statement of a Batwa representative:

You know but there is one major problem (with this park). Instead of being harassed by these people from the Fishery Department we are harassed by those game scouts. And we are very much related to the people from the Fishery Department but not to those from the Wildlife Department, the game scouts – they give us headache[s]. Instead give the job to the Fishery Department [to] take over. And you know

they shall just do their part but not take over the other part. But instead of giving a chance to their friends they take over the powers simply because they have guns. And in fact they are the people killing a lot of animals and fishing a lot as well. They bring in many friends who do these activities or they sell the meat and the fish privately. So we are not happy. You see once we catch or kill something small for us they say that we have killed their animals, Yet they are the people finishing the animals because they have the guns. They can kill five or ten animals a day and they sell privately to people coming from town. So this is very bad. (Batwa informant September 2002)⁷

These problems are not unique to Lochinvar Park but are a general difficulty in wildlife management today (Gibson 1999; Galvin and Haller 2008; Haller and Merten 2010; Haller 2013). The statement above is interesting because it shows that some form of state control is welcomed, but locals fail to understand why, when outsiders are allowed access, they are unable to profit from the fisheries and wildlife. This creates a classic prisoner's dilemma: if the fish and the game are not taken locally, outsiders will them. Indeed it is outsiders, not the locals, who have more bargaining power, backed by the conventional law, as local institutions are dismantled and outsiders claim to have licences for the GMA or bribe the scouts to allow them to hunt and fish inside the park.

Change of Social Norms and Cultural Identity

The vast immigration of mainly young fishermen from urban centres is accompanied by enormous social problems in the

7. This informant was interviewed in Nyimba in November 2002. His name has been omitted to ensure anonymity.

respective villages: alcohol, violence and disobedience towards the elders occur daily. The dynamics can be described as follows: the immigrant fishermen refuse to follow the traditional authorities, citing their status as Zambian citizens, which means they are not accountable to traditional Batwa authorities. The main problem for the Batwa is what we have labelled elsewhere the present-absent state, meaning that the state is not present to enforce its institutions, while outsiders are able to refer to state ownership of the resource and their entitlement to use that resource (Haller and Merten 2008, 2010; Haller 2013). Adding to this is the lack of respect shown by young Batwa towards older family members. Traditional institutions are regarded as archaic and lacking in validity. The fact that the Batwa headmen have lost their power to regulate access to the fisheries for locals and outsiders, regardless of traditional or state regulations, only enforces this behaviour. Simultaneously, state law enforcement authorities – needed to uphold regulations of the fisheries or prosecute crimes – are absent. Only in the case of severe crimes such as murder, will the police be called in. If fights and assaults of women, combined with excess alcohol consumption, get out of control, it remains in the power of the headmen to solve these problems. Whether or not a headman is able to enforce his authority depends on the number of immigrant, partly seasonal fishermen involved.

Many fishermen use part of their income for beer, and it is common practice that women are given presents or goods in return for sexual favours. Traditional regulations concerning the relationships between men and women are no longer, or only partly, conformed to. We will elaborate on this example, which clearly illustrates how the influx of immigrants due to an open-access situation affects social norms, which on first glance appear to be unrelated to fishing. Massive immigration marginalizes the Batwa, not only in the fisheries but in many

social aspects of life involving food, marriage and other customs. Batwa have a taste for food, which is considered by the immigrants to be rotten (fish). They also adhere to a two-year period of post-partum abstinence. The immigrant fishermen regard this as primitive, although post-partum abstinence was found in the whole area (Fowler 2002: 43). The immigrant fishermen have turned this regulation into a Batwa custom. The start of these changes are described by a Batwa informant:

It [was] the time when a lot of other men were coming into our area. It [was] then these other men were contacting our women. So many people are going in and are going out. So there is no way of getting out from your visitors. There are many people from different parts of Zambia. You cannot stop this because these people say what you are doing is primitive – we are now in a new generation and we do not follow these old things. Your tribe is useless; we do these things differently. So this is why we cannot follow our tradition anymore.

As this statement demonstrates, many Batwa norms have changed, although on certain occasions these ideologies may be strategically redefined in an effort to increase bargaining power, momentarily becoming a weapon of the weak (Ensminger 1992; Scott 1985).

Ethnic Identity and Strategic Redefinition of Culture

Ethnic identity and the value of Batwa culture is another facet of the fisheries situation and this can be experienced positively or negatively according to the situation. When the situation is beneficial the Batwa refer to their ideology and cultural norms, but on other occasions when identification with the Batwa cultural is inopportune, it is negated. For example, the

use of magic when dealing with matters pertaining to the fisheries and food patterns may contribute to a temporary positive identity, but will not change the overall situation.

As mentioned previously, Batwa have little bargaining power over immigrant fishermen. There are, however, occasions when this is challenged. In Nyimba, the Batwa headman, an elder, maintains considerable authority over the people, as he is considered to be a powerful wizard, able to command the abundant hippos in the area. Generally speaking, the fact that powerful local leaders are seen to be wizards is common all over the Kafue Flats and explains why, despite widespread opposition, a person can remain in power (LaMunière 1969). In the case of Nyimba, this idea is enforced by accidents with hippos in the vicinity of the village whereby fishermen have been killed. The Batwa refer to their ancestors as being angry with the foreign fishermen who don't respect the sacred Batwa places, and this is seen to be the reason why the hippos get upset and subsequently attack and kill people. Only the Batwa can be in contact with their ancestors, and they set the rules of where and how to fish. Not respecting their laws results in the risk of being killed. Some old Batwa men, such as the actual headman, are said to use magic powers to command these dangerous animals and the ancestral spirits. Therefore, if accidents with these animals happen, some Batwa believe this provides ample proof for their beliefs. For example, in March 2002 two immigrant fishermen died after being attacked and killed by hippos in the main Kafue River. These fishermen were using the *kutumpula*-fishing method. The Batwa interpreted the death of the two fishermen as the sanction of the ancestral spirits and as the ability of the headman and others to use their magic powers. So for a short moment the old ideology is of use when explaining norm deviation by those who are more powerful than the Batwa themselves. This is, on the one hand, explaining incidents in their religious terms and reinforcing

the value of their religion contrary to the dominant Christian way of thinking. But on the other hand such incidents do not seem to change the negative attitudes the immigrant fishermen have towards the Batwa, for the cultural changes among the Batwa are stronger than their influence on the immigrants. The *de facto* open-access fishery not only causes a decline in catches but also leads to changes in the social values and norms of the Batwa. Their authority is limited compared to the number and the bargaining power of the immigrant fishermen. As cash is available on a regular basis for fishermen, revenues are usually spent as soon as the fish is sold. Despite incidents such as the death of the two fishermen, young local Batwa have started to scorn the rules and now fish with nets, and just like the other commercial fishermen they too sell the fish to traders who come twice a week to the fish markets at the Chunga Lagoon, situated partly in Lochinvar National Park (Haller and Merten 2008, 2010; Haller 2013).

When viewed from the point of the Batwa as marginalized and stigmatized people, it is a practical strategy to call on the Department of Fisheries for help. Should the Department of Fisheries regain power, the Batwa's problems would begin to be resolved, because their rules for fishing are partly compatible with those of the fisheries' laws, especially regarding the closing times. However, Batwa rules are more fine-tuned as they have knowledge of breeding areas and do not fully ban fishing activities between December and February. Indeed it would be possible for them to use the Department of Fisheries to exclude the immigrant fishermen who do not follow the traditional rules, especially those that protect the breeding areas of fish. Although the Wildlife Department has an increased presence, it is perceived to be more predatory than supportive. Thus the marginalized Batwa do not rely on it, and instead opt for support from the weaker (in this context) Department of Fisheries. Therefore the notion that the

Department of Fisheries should step in is rather rhetorical, especially for younger Batwa fishermen who now also violate local and state rules and regulations.

Conclusion

The following factors have led to a *de facto* open-access situation in the Kafue Flats. First there is the opening up during colonial times for commercial fishing. Second is the dismantling of the commons and traditional institutional regulations by allowing immigration, where immigrants have no obligation to follow traditional rules. But, finally, it is the implementation of new formal state institutions of access, without having the means for monitoring or sanctioning regulations, that creates the major problem. The only option that the Batwa have is to turn to the state, more precisely to the department which they think is not excluding them from the commons, but helping them to make sustainable use of the resources. Through realizing that this part of the state is unable to fulfil its duties in order to compensate for the failure of collective action against the dominant immigrants, more and more Batwa see themselves in a prisoner's dilemma situation, whereby fishing illegally becomes the best option and enables the young men in particular to gain money from traders. Thus the local economy has changed deeply, as has the power structure in the autochthonous group. Young men are demonstrating more bargaining power. Unfortunately, though, many drink excessively. Consequently the traditional authority of the elders is increasingly eroding, and gender relations are facing new conflict scenarios. Therefore it is not only the declining availability of fish and wildlife which threatens the existence of the Batwa hunting and fishing culture but, together with the denial of their power to control their resources, their

cultural identity has been hollowed, as it is considered to be one of the most primitive among the diverse ethnic groups in the region. Today, many Batwa refer to themselves as being Tonga or Lozi in order to avoid the stigmatization connected to Batwa ethnicity – due to intermarriage, which has been quite common, most families can refer to ancestors of other tribes.

On the other hand, it has been shown that some immigrants heavily fear the Batwa magic. The Batwa, who are said to have the best herbs against crocodile and hippo attacks, still openly praise that part of their culture, which is at the same time upholding their power. There are situations where they make reference to their Batwa identity, be it stigmatized or not: in the eyes of the Batwa, fishing without respecting their regulations leads to a disturbance of the relationship between the ancestral spirits and the fishermen, disturbing the catches in the river and evoking accidents with hippos and crocodiles. With Scott (1985) we can argue that even if in the long term this ideology does not seem to give the benefit local Batwa actors want to achieve, it still gives them a point of reference and strength they can strategically use against intruders (Haller 2013).

As has been shown in this article, the change of norms upholds this ambiguity. Sometimes too they are contradictory when dealing with aspects of stigmatization arising from ineffective state control and immigration. So in some specific political contexts, being Batwa and complying with Batwa norms is connected with very negative consequences; in others it is the basis of identity and a means to gain power in a powerless situation. We have argued that the change in relative prices triggering institutional change for the management of the commons and the connected property rights from common property to open access does not only have an impact on the access to fisheries and wildlife but also impacts on the change of social norms, and has led to the stigmatization of local indigenous peoples. Secondly, the dominant power of the state

in the area is experienced in the fortress conservation approach of the Lochinvar Park. Despite participative approaches, the fortress attitude towards local people seems to be dominant among scouts, masking the open-access situation of the hunting sector. Scouts therefore try to profit from the weakness of local people, while locals try to demand state support from outside the conservation sector. Thirdly, as local norms change, some traditional norms do not fully erode. Rather they are upheld such that actors with less bargaining power may use them as a weapon of the weak. In addition, playing one department against another demonstrates that actors strategically seek to incorporate portions of the state perceived to be the most supportive and beneficial.

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CHAPTER X

Lessons from Agricultural Extension and Marketing Services in Southern Zambia, 1933–80

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Abstract

This paper examines the spread of agricultural extension services and marketing practices from Southern Zambia to some other parts of the country. Provision of agricultural extension and marketing services in Southern Zambia from the time more systematic colonial state intervention began in the 1930s to the time the independent state radically revised marketing arrangements c. 1980 is an important review of social and economic studies of Zambia. The studies of anthropologists and historians on the relationship between labour migration and farming in the Southern Province of Zambia pointed to prevalence among the Tonga of critical indigenous knowledge about agriculture. This gave the Tonga confidence in manipulating labour migration and the colonial economy in order to sustain local production and maintain their control over their cultural institutions. Dixon-Fyle's work (1977) brought out the role of the SDA Church in promoting better agricultural practices, and nationalists in helping the Tonga to shape colonial agricultural policies. Chipungu's (1988)

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evaluation of the role of technology pointed to an important aspect in service provision in agriculture. This diverse engagement with agriculture in Southern Zambia by local communities, state and church has no comparable experience elsewhere in Zambia. What lessons did Zambia learn? How significant is indigenous production and marketing knowledge in development, based on experiences in Southern Zambia?

Introduction

Elizabeth Colson's paper on the northern section of the Tonga Plateau in *African Studies* in 1948 was the first scholarly assessment of colonial policies among Tonga people in Southern Zambia. Colson's publication initiated a diverse range, and long tradition, of research covering environmental history, government intervention, socio-economic change, and transformation of gender relations in Southern Zambia. Her perceptive scholarship recognized three major forces that had entered Butonga (country of the Tonga) during the nineteenth century and decisively shaped the political economy of the Tonga and Zambia in the twentieth century onwards. The first external intervention was the arrival of the Makololo and Ndebele who laid lasting bonds between Central and Southern Africa and also exposed the Tonga to patrilineal cultural practices. The Tonga people are still struggling to integrate patrilineal practices into long-established matrilineal values and practices (Colson 1950; Kanduzza 2008). The second was the Christian missionary frontier, which David Livingstone initiated when he visited the Victoria Falls in 1853 and later journeyed through Tonga country. In the Mazabuka area, the Munali Hills were named to remember Livingstone's visit. Several Christian groups followed Livingstone's pioneering work. The Seventh Day Adventists (SDA) and Roman Catholic

churches entered Tongaland in 1905 and became engaged in developing education and practical farming skills among the Tonga. The third social force was capitalism, in the form of the British South Africa Company, which built its railway line from Livingstone through the Tonga country and sponsored capitalist settlement (Colson 1958: 7–14; Vickery 1986). Subsequent colonization of Zambia, with its headquarters at Kalomo, later at Livingstone and finally at Lusaka in 1935, reflected the logic that, according to Young (2001), a government conversant with conditions for capitalist reproduction was necessary. The Tonga in Southern Zambia adopted some of the things that the colonial economy had introduced and integrated them into what they had known and practised for many generations.

The geographical expression 'Southern Zambia' is borrowed from Vickery and used to acknowledge the problems of using the term Tonga, an ethnographic identity most common in anthropological studies. The term Tonga refers to a mixture of diverse matrilineal groups with a closely shared history and they continue to acknowledge many cultural practices that distinguish them from their neighbours (Colson 1958: 1–2). Doke classified the dialects of the Tonga-related people as belonging to the Central Bantu group of languages (1945: 31). Yet some groups such as the Toka, Leya or Subiya who extend to Botswana, or the Ila and Lenje in Central Province at times claim a separate identity from the Tonga. Briefly, Tonga identity has historically been highly fractured yet intricately integrated through external pressures on dynamics within the Tonga since the nineteenth century. Colonial boundaries and education contributed to reconstruction of the Tonga identity as it has been known from the 1930s. The Tonga are a cultural maze. Geographically, the Tonga reside either on the plateau formed from, or in the valleys of, two main rivers in Zambia, namely the Kafue and the Zambezi. There are Tonga on the Zimbabwe side of the Zambezi

but they are not part of the present discussion. Studies of Southern Zambia have shown unusual sensitivity to the role of environmental factors, gender relations, cultural practices, economic policies and nationalist politics in developments among the Tonga (Scudder 1962; Colson and Scudder 1970; Colson 1971; Dixon-Fyle 1977; Smith 2004; Cliggett 2005). This paper argues that the Tonga developed principles of egalitarian values and matrilineal networks which helped them to cope with a chain of external interventions and environment changes.

These developments fed each other to create historical issues which have been a subject of scholarship ever since Colson's seminal research from the late 1940s. In a reflection on Colson's work about forty years later, John A. Barnes observed that the colonial enterprise among the Tonga had some positive effects. Barnes recalled that 'one reason for [Tonga] acquiescence in this state of affairs was that the proximity of the railway line made it possible for industrious and ambitious individuals to become relatively prosperous' (2000: 14). In this author's opinion, a realistic balance sheet on colonialism, and post-colonial rural development in Zambia, depends on a good understanding of some Tonga matrilineal social networks, cultural practices and institutions; Colson is a key contributor to that seminal literature.

All of these external interventions had various disorienting and deleterious effects among the Tonga, but the Tonga held on to their indigenous knowledge, values and matrilineal principles, which remained essential to their survival. It will be demonstrated in this discussion that from the 1930s to c. 1980, primary support from matrilineal social networks (*basimukowa*) was supplemented by the father's matrilineal kinsmen (*basyanausi*) in order to shape the lives and responses of the Tonga in Southern Zambia. The Tonga continually absorbed changing frontiers and adapted their capacities to deal with internal and external emergent situations or horizons.

Those working on indigenous knowledge see it as learned and developed from local experiences, and as being passed from one generation to the next orally and through regular social practices (Nwonwo 2008). This discussion will also examine an example of enduring characteristics in the course of complex historical changes, which Ajayi considered the essence of African history, while colonialism was a mere passing episode. In 1969, Ajayi argued that despite the profound effects of colonialism in Africa, African history was primarily shaped by institutions and processes with a longer history within African societies than European colonialism. Almost thirty years later, at a conference on 'Rethinking African History' at the University of Edinburgh, he repeated and refined his position by observing that socio-economic and political events in Africa were significantly shaped by values and practices in African societies which both colonialism and neo-colonialism failed to destroy (Ajayi 1997). It is therefore analytically useful to appreciate influences from within African societies. In fact, there are occasions where these practices and values have dominant influences in the actions of African traditional leaders and their rural societies. New things tend to be seen in the context of what is locally known and understood, and are accepted when people do not feel undermined.

Social and Agricultural Production in Tonga Studies

Ajayi's observation is useful in historiographical assessment, such as is being attempted in this discussion. It should be highlighted at the outset that this discussion is not a restudy of Colson or Scudder along the lines of trends in anthropological research in Zambia in the 1980s and 1990s, which David Gordon reviewed (2003). Scholarship of anthropologists on Southern Zambia during the last sixty years is remarkable because it is

comprehensive in the breadth and diversity of issues covered. Studies on the Tonga in Southern Zambia, especially the pioneering works of Colson, demonstrate an awareness of the role of applied human and social science research. Colson's works are useful, in part, because they give us insights into Tonga cultural, environmental and farming science along the lines of the views of Ajayi. Colson appreciated the significance of matrilineality and related social or cultural networks. Matrilineal groups are important in the social, cultural and economic activities of the Tonga. In this perspective, matrilineality is a bond based on something stronger than congeniality or economic interest. Colson further asserted that matrilineality is a basis of solidarity among the Tonga. Writing with a specific reference to forced movement of the Gwembe Tonga during the construction of the Kariba Dam in 1956–57, Colson observed that 'when they felt threatened with extinction, or with the extinction of their humanity through being pushed into the bush to become animals, they clung to known kinsmen who shared with them the responsibility for the perpetuation of their lineage and clan' (1971: 70). Already in this paper, three foreign influences occurring since the nineteenth century have been noted as having had an enduring impact on the Tonga in the twentieth century. However, the threats Colson noted in her 1971 study of the Gwembe Tonga could be extended to the Plateau Tonga – including land alienation, poor production, and poor marketing services from both the colonial and post-colonial governments. Matrilineal practices and networks are time tested and galvanize the Tonga to adjust to modernized domination. There have always been valuable lessons for Zambia from Tonga cultural arrangements, agricultural extension services, and the marketing of agricultural and veterinary products in Southern Zambia.

Changes in agricultural extension services and commodity marketing arrangements from the 1930s to the 1980s; foreign cultural influences; missionary work; and development of a

capitalist economy are some issues the Tonga struggled with from the late nineteenth century. Systematic intervention to improve agricultural production and marketing began between 1933 and 1936 in the initiatives of J. C. Lewin, Director of Agriculture, when he proposed radical reforms of agricultural production and marketing policies in colonial Zambia.² Colson (1958) and Dixon-Fyle (1977) have shown that these new colonial interventions began among the Tonga and were only extended to other provinces such as Eastern Province from 1946.

First came the collapse of the commodity market in colonial Zambia because of the world depression of 1929–33, as reflected in a 78 per cent fall in the labour force on the Copperbelt between 1931 and 1933. There were high rates of redundancy in many labour sectors (39 per cent in agriculture, 30 per cent in government and 24 per cent in the railways), and consumption fell from about three hundred thousand to one hundred and fifty thousand bags of marketed maize. Second came external competition, especially from colonial Zimbabwe, for the weakened domestic market was strong (Kanduza 1986). Third, the crippling impact of competition from private traders caused unstable prices and uncertainty in supplies.³ In response, the director of agriculture proposed market controls for maize and cattle in 1933. The Northern Rhodesia Legislative Council established an Agricultural Advisory Board in November 1934 and the Maize Marketing and Control Board in November 1935. These statutory bodies supervised the Maize Marketing and Control ordinance from 1936 and the Cattle Marketing Control Ordinance from 1937. Three quarters of the market was reserved for white farmers at guaranteed prices ranging from eight to ten shillings per 200 lb bag. African producers along the railway

2. National Archives of Zambia (NAZ), SEC/1/48, C. J. Lewin to Chief Secretary, 9 May 1936.

3. NAZ, SEC/1/58, Chief Secretary to PACS, 22 March 1934.

between Livingstone and Ndola were given one quarter of the market and at fixed prices ranging between five and six shillings in 1936. This basic discriminatory framework of preferential price and marketing arrangements continued until the end of colonial rule in 1964.

Effectively, by this arrangement the privileged underdogs among African producers were farmers in the Tonga ethnic complex, because poor transportation, poor marketing and low prices (as was similarly the case during the Presidency of F. T. J. Chiluba in the 1990s) excluded those (African) producers located further away from the railway line. This does not mean that it was easy for Tonga farmers, who were normally located some 30 km away from the railway and dealing with markets poorly arranged by the state. Private traders and farmer traders always took advantage of the desperate situations in which Tonga producers found themselves from time to time (Muntemba 1977). Market and price controls impeded agricultural progress because of the nature of political power relations in the colonial state. Despite these severe constraints on agricultural production, performance and survival during the colonial era, Tonga farmers recognize their extraordinary experiences and how they survived. This approach is further enriched when we understand that the post-colonial state, despite its peasant base (Rasmussen 1974), was prevented from implementing policies favouring peasants and dynamic agricultural production by the interests of labour (Gupta 1974), noise-making urban groups, and prescriptions of international lending and donor organizations (Weinrich 1978).

Constraints on peasant farming, and agriculture generally, in the 1930s should be thoroughly understood in order to draw meaningful conclusions from several decades of studies on the Tonga. From the time agricultural statistics on African production began to be collected systematically from the 1930s, and until the 1980s, the Tonga represented the breadbasket of Zambia.

Figure 5 displays the magnitude and complexity of the dilemma the Tonga encountered. Unfavourable weather conditions were a major cause of low and fluctuating agricultural yields in the early 1930s. Chipungu (1988) cited locust invasions in the 1930s as one of the key constraints on farming. Natural disasters such as drought or locust invasions were severe because the colonial state gave more relief to white settlers than African farmers. However, the dispersed matrilineal Tonga households as Colson described meant that they experienced these disasters differently and they were thus able to help one another as demanded by reciprocal obligations of their social relations (1951, 1958). Dispersed settlements also meant that one matrilineal group would help another in selling maize, cattle and other products to private traders. Dispersed matrilineal groups shared economic intelligence in order to secure relatively good prices from traders who were ruthless in depressing prices.

Figure 5: Maize Produce 1931–38

	African	White Settlers
Year	(thousands of 200-lb bags)	
1930–31	30	168
1931–32	55	179
1932–33	71	247
1933–34	20	91
1934–35	200	132
1935–36	235	274
1936–37	200	242
1937–38	130	158

Source: Northern Rhodesia Department of Agriculture, Annual Reports, 1931–39.

Here, Ajayi gives inspiration for careful analysis. Tonga matrilineal arrangements, shaped by their long history of studying nature and designing appropriate response strategies, were also under attack from the colonial state and settler farmers. Colson asserted that the Tonga were guided by a dogma that relatives helped one another. Matrilineal groups could not be separated by distance for as long as memory of their alliance persisted. Colson (1958: 20) went on to make a lengthy elaboration:

[T]o maintain the ties of kinship, it is not necessary for all, or even the major portion, of a group to remain in close proximity with each other. The Tonga have never believed that kinsmen should live together in a single village, or even within a single neighbourhood. There are geographical limits beyond which cooperation becomes impossible but within these limits kinsmen are free to disperse without detriment to their common solidarity. Indeed, the frequency of localized droughts accompanied by local crop failures turns the dispersal of kindred into an asset rather than a liability, for each person is provided with a claim on food produced in other localities.

It is a widespread practice in Zambia and Southern Africa to loan out domesticated animals such as pigs, goats or cattle to kinsmen and friends in distant places because natural disasters are unpredictable and it was usually difficult to prepare protection or relief. The Tonga grounded their survival strategy in these matrilineal networks. Colson and Scudder's studies of the Tonga (Colson and Scudder 1970) transcend many ethnographical works in demonstrating how the Tonga developed strategies which retained their dynamic egalitarian socio-cultural values as they cooperated across diverse environments. These studies recognized that the ethos of the

Tonga was to maintain their matrilineal and egalitarian values while accommodating change within their communities and their external environment. However, there were limitations.

The differences in marketing arrangements and pricing policies discussed earlier are among these limitations and reveal the hegemony of settler farming interests. In fact, at times, divergence of interest between different sections of capital did not help peasant production in the 1930s. For example, in May 1939 the general manager of Mufulira Copper Mine, Francis Ayer, asked the North-Western Rhodesia Farmers' Cooperative Society to reduce the price of Maize sold to the mines because the Society bought some of the maize at a low price from African (peasant) producers and sold the maize at a high price, as if it had been produced by white settler farmers.⁴ In fact, many successful settler farmers were also successful buyers of maize from Africans. Capitalist accumulation recognizes the significance of multipliers' effects. Tonga peasants along the railway line were marginalized in colonial and imperial politics during the 1930s. Here traditional Tonga political relations prevented the Tonga, and all colonized Africans generally, from engaging in social protest and to demand social justice. Protest was atomized because of Tonga traditions and the nature of peasant politics. This, however, does not mean a total absence of protest and collaboration across social classes. Hall has evidence of Chief Mukuni in Livingstone reporting grievances about land alienation, and poor prices for cattle and maize to a meeting of the Livingstone Welfare Association in 1935 (Hall 1965: 127). In fact, colonial policies on urbanization and freedom of movements among Africans meant that the Tonga elsewhere in urban areas articulated rural grievances on land and farming policies generally. These Tonga intellectuals were ineffectual. More

4. NAZ, SEC/1/69, F. Ayer to Secretary, Maize Control Board, 9 May 1939.

crippling is the fact that control measures in the 1930s included a policy of restricting peasant production, ostensibly because its expansion would deplete farming soils. A popular mythology among white settler farmers was that Africans mined the land (Kanduza 1986: 167–68).

This mythology pushed the state to launch agricultural extension work among the Tonga at Kanchomba Agricultural Station in Chief Siamaundu's area in Choma in 1936.⁵ Earlier, in 1929, an Agricultural Research Station had been set up at Mazabuka to help settler farmers only. Mazabuka was the heartland of white settler farming and consequently had the worst record of land dispossession and landlessness among Africans in colonial Zambia. The Kanchomba Agricultural Station was in the heartland of Tonga country and Colson and Dixon-Fyle showed that the rural areas between Choma and Keembe in Kabwe produced over 80 per cent of African-marketed agricultural and veterinary commodities from the 1930s to the end of colonial rule in 1964 (Colson 1958: 70–78; Dixon-Fyle 1977). This can be further appreciated in Figure 6. Agricultural education was anticipated to diffuse from this centre to all producers and pastoralists on the Plateau and Gwembe Valley, and from there to several parts of colonial Zambia. This was the spirit and purpose of the Improved Farmers Scheme introduced in 1946. The colonial administration did not understand the principles of choice in Tonga society where they launched and experimented with policies later applied to African farming throughout the country. The Tonga were not attracted to arrangements made supposedly to improve productivity and farming.⁶

The colonial administration was desperate to stabilize agricultural production and supplies in the 1940s. Between

5. NAZ, SEC/1/58, *Memorandum on the Work of the Agriculture Department*, 1938.

6. NAZ, KSB/3/1, *Mazabuka Notebook*, Tour Report No. 4, 1951.

1942 and 1947, two fundamental changes were made to the policy on maize pricing and rules governing who received services from the Kanchomba Agricultural Station. First, in 1946 the government raised the price of maize sold to the Maize Control Board so that it covered the cost of production in the settler farming community. The price was thirteen shillings a bag and the subsidy was two shillings.⁷ Although the principle of covering the cost of production was commendable, the administration did not have enough or good enough data to have this done properly. Such inefficiency normally resulted in adverse policies for African farming. A second policy change was the creation of Peasant Farmers in 1944, a group which was considered more advanced than those in the Improved Farmers Scheme created when the Kanchomba Agricultural Station was launched in 1936. The Peasant Farmers were assumed capable of using fertilizers, cattle manure and other forms of organic elements to improve productivity. They also had better farming implements. For this extra effort, they were given a price subsidy so that they received a higher price than most African producers but one lower than that paid to white farmers. Others were given a 'Participation Certificate' so that they could sell to the Maize Control Board at the same price as white farmers. There were 119 farmers with certificates in 1943 but this number fell to ninety-five in 1947 because they had not been paid the price they were promised.⁸ Yet the Director of Agriculture observed in 1945 that 'a careful survey of native areas along the line of rail had borne out the view that the only way to get improved farming methods was by paying an enhanced price'.⁹ Many Tonga farmers either were not keen to join or withdrew membership.

7. NAZ, SEC/1/71, *Food Production Committee Report*, 1946.

8. NAZ, SEC, Samson Kaonde to Director of Agriculture, 17 January 1947.

9. NAZ, SEC/1/80, C. J.. Lewin, *Maize Control Board Minutes*, 18 April 1947.

Between 1946 and 1954, Colson researched the impact of policies to encourage Africans to join these special farming schemes (1958: 71–73). In 1945 she found that 85 per cent of the Tonga farmers produced less than ten bags of maize per year. Fourteen per cent produced between ten and one hundred bags and less than one per cent produced more than one hundred bags. There were eighteen thousand registered farmers in 1950 but only 556 could be identified in 1951. An authoritative official report indicated that there were ninety-five Improved Farmers in 1947, 303 in 1948 and 349 in 1949 in an estimated population of eighteen thousand potential farmers (Morgan-Rees 1958). Colson observed that some ‘who pride themselves on their farming do not register because they object to particular features of the scheme’ (1958: 72). Dixon-Fyle found that the SDA had trained more African farmers since 1924 than the government had between 1936 and 1950 (1977: 586–90). Those trained by the SDA did not think that there was much to learn from government farming projects. There was also trade in other commodities such as chickens and eggs, which generated between 25 per cent and 33 per cent of cash incomes in most households in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Colson 1958: 73–78). William Allan, an official in the department of agriculture and another thorough scholar on economic development in colonial Zambia, considered colonial government policies on African agriculture to have been a huge failure (1965; Baldwin 1966: 161).

This analysis leads to at least one critical factor related to extension services and marketing in Zambian studies. Grounded in their egalitarian socio-cultural values, the Tonga took voluntary strategies to generate services essential to sustain their agricultural production and the marketing of their commodities (labour, crops, cattle, fish, etc.) in a new economy into which they had become integrated. This voluntary generation of knowledge and skills for production was

consistent with Tonga values of social and political relations or equality. The *makowa*, a social network based on matrilineal kinship, facilitated the spread of general skills in increasing production and, consequently, marketing of surplus, partly induced because of or for the capitalist colonial economy. In the context of a negligent colonial government and grossly inefficient post-colonial administration in managing agriculture, the *basimukowa* and closely related networks enabled the Tonga to arrange cattle sales in urban areas and on the Copperbelt, through relatives engaged in wage employment there (Jones 1977; Good 1986). The Tonga used the railway to transport cattle for sale to matrilineal kin in urban areas, especially on the Copperbelt. Matrilineal networks were not always successful in economic management among the Tonga however. General economic conditions during and after colonial rule affected the rewards of matrilineal networks. Christianity and western education had also introduced tendencies towards nuclear families and patrilineal succession practices but these transitions did not prevent most Tonga from rationalizing in matrilineal terms their expectation for support.

There is a long history of this networking in Southern Zambia and this was an important source of farming technology such as plough, which Colson, Vickery, Dixon-Fyle (1977, 1983) and Chipungu (1988) each studied. Two views on technology emerge from these studies. First, the Tonga were congratulated for the way they adopted farming technology. They engaged in labour migration in order to acquire farming implements. The SDA taught new farming methods. Many Tonga also learned from white farmers. The building of the technological miracle, the Kariba Dam, in 1956–57 caused indescribable pain among the Gwembe Tonga. These developments tended to remind the Tonga about the value of matrilineal social and economic networks which they had evolved before European colonization and which was also a coping strategy as they

interacted with various groups in the colonial political economy. The Tonga, however, did not substitute their local knowledge completely with knowledge learned from the emerging capitalist economy. The colonial state failed the Tonga in many ways, and frequently, and Tonga people distrusted colonial officials. In view of this, for example, Muntemba (1977) showed how dependent the Tonga and their related kin in Southern and Central Provinces were on private traders in marketing both maize and cattle before attainment of independence in 1964. The Tonga employed matrilineal-based networks in their struggle to set up marketing arrangements parallel to those of traders and the colonial state, especially as production of maize increased, as is shown in Figure 6.

One indirect result of Tonga economic independence and reliance on their cultural and matrilineal networks was a low level of labour migration compared to other parts of the country. This was further systematically and historically demonstrated through the work of Vickery (1986). Vickery showed that from the 1890s to the 1930s, while the foundation of labour migration from rural farming to enclaves of capitalist investments was laid in most parts of Zambia, the Tonga remained rooted in their farming and pastoral economy. There was not as much permanent or long-term dislocation from rural farming as there was among most societies, as observed by Thandi Mvusi on the Bemba (1986) or Lyton Zgambo on eastern Zambia (1992). Mvusi argued that labour migration among the Bemba created structural rural unemployment because on return from urban and mining centres, many Bemba people did not have skills appropriate for economies in their traditional home areas. This radical definition of unemployment contrasts remarkably with conventional wisdom in Zambian studies of associating employment or unemployment with wage or capitalist economies. Colson and

Figure 6: Marketed Maize 1946–64 (in 200-lb bags)

Year	African	European
1946	173	318
1947	66	149
1948	362	344
1949	62	282
1950	373	448
1951	321	398
1952	171	390
1953	576	600
1954	658	664
1955	433	606
1956	746	900
1957	883	1202
1958	636	544
1959	516	1021
1960	738	945
1961	955	1298
1962	838	1489
1963	838	1489
1964	795	1341

Source: Commission of Inquiry into the Maize and Small Grains Industry of Northern and Southern Rhodesia 1963.

Vickery studied how the Tonga either minimized engagement in labour migration or used their involvement in wage employment to consolidate skills relevant to their rural farming, pastoral and fishing economies.

Cliggett (2005) shows how this changed radically from the 1970s. She investigated intergenerational relations in order to

understand how old and vulnerable people were cared for by their children. She stressed that many people who had migrated from the Gwembe Valley to seek wage employment in towns of Southern Province, in Lusaka and on the Copperbelt settled in urban areas either out of choice or because of economic circumstances. Cliggett displayed extraordinary energy, enthusiasm, endurance and creativity in her research. Remarkably, she followed up the research of Colson and Scudder to trace and link many individuals in urban areas to their rural families, especially in the Gwembe Valley. Tonga migration after 1964 conformed to national trends because the government of independent Zambia removed restrictions that had been placed on movements of Africans during the colonial period. Another important policy contribution was based on ideas of nation building. This was a deliberate policy to have civil servants and employees of parastatal organizations work away from their rural origins. Conducting research in Petauke, Chama and Chipata between 1983 and 1986, on people's attitudes to introducing titles to customary land, this author found many Tonga who had retired and bought farms in Chipata (Kanduza 1987). There were others who settled on customary land through permission from chiefs. A strong recommendation to the chiefs was a widely known reputation that the Tonga were good farmers.

These changes did not put brothers, daughters and sons beyond the reach of matrilineal practices. Cliggett (2005: 2) observed that 'the Gwembe Tonga have a matrilineal system that defines proper family, kin, resource ownership and transmission, and a host of other cultural features. So while focusing on specific features of Gwembe social life we also learn about the workings of a matrilineal kinship system'. Old women who went to solicit help from their brothers, daughters and sons were motivated by matrilineal principles to help mothers and other matrilineal kin. What is remarkable in

reading Colson and Cliggett is the latter's view that 'in both the past and the present, the Tonga demonstrate resiliency in their social system' (2005: 9). The Tonga women stated their expectation of help as if they sought compensation for the pain and suffering of bringing up their children. Maybe Cliggett's stress that 'women's strategies are tied to their identity as mothers who have given life and sacrificed for the benefit of their children' (2005: 18–22) brings out notions of reward, investment and compensation, and thus obscure, unquantifiable and priceless values and emotions of matrilineal culture. Matrilineal values emerged as daughters and daughters-in-law returned to rural areas to deliver their first or second child.

These strong attributes of matrilineal Southern Zambia were not acknowledged by either the colonial or post-colonial governments. The independent Zambian government abolished discriminatory production and pricing systems immediately on attaining power. It inherited public enterprises in the agricultural sector; in fact it was one of the few governments that received many state-supported companies at independence (Due 1983). Policies to correct historical wrongs of interventionist states in the 1960s and 1970s failed to use the resources in Tonga matrilineality. Some scholars argue that at around 1980, agricultural policies of the Zambian government placed emphasis on protecting human values, possibly as we see in the Tonga matrilineal system (Seshemani 1990). However, the government was in a weak position because it had no money to support its policies, while the Bretton Woods institutions were willing to finance their policy recommendations despite being rejected by the Zambian government. In 1980 Zambia launched Operation Food Production. It had hoped to invest US\$500 million. This was due partly to the governing party's socialist inclination at the time and partly because of a need to reduce food

imports from South Africa and Zimbabwe Rhodesia. The most critical goal was 'to feed the nation through developing agriculture and secondarily to encourage more urban Zambians to return to farming' (Burdette 1988: 119). These good intentions failed because most of the funding was expected to come from outside Zambia. Tonga logic suggests that people should grow from their own matrilineal corporate resources.

Matriliny, Commodity Markets and Situation Analysis

With insights from what Gluckman termed 'situation analysis' (1940), a cattle and beef auction market in Mwanamayinda, on the southern outskirts of Kafue Town, represents a more recent example of how the Tonga employed matrilineal and kinship networks in order to engage in broad economic activities, raise investments in agriculture, and partly avoid migration for urban-based employment. Gluckman used this approach in studying contemporary social relations, which helped him to interpret historical change by focusing on a single event. Situation analysis is a study of how moments in time reveal holistic and historical processes. This involves reconciling particular events in a given time frame to broad social, economic and political developments. In one of the most useful re-evaluations of anthropological studies and social change on the Copperbelt and urbanization in Zambia, Ferguson (1990a and 1990b) used the 'situation analysis' framework at a beer bar where Zambians from many parts of the country drank and danced to music from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to explain historical and emergent processes of integration. Auslander (1993) used this framework in the study of the Ngoni when he examined one 'witch finding' event in

Chipata. Flint (2006) used it in studying the Lozi Kuomboka ceremony in 2003. Cliggett's work on the Gwembe Tonga appears to have employed a 'situation analysis' framework, as she focused on particular events or people which she wove together to show how matrilineality functions among the Tonga despite threatening challenges. Colson and Scudder (1970) examined similar processes that undermined Tonga matrilineal and kinship networks.

That rich historiography helps us to understand the Mwanamayinda cattle market in Kafue as an example of Tonga production and marketing. Mwanamayinda is a market to which cattle are brought and slaughtered, and the beef sold. It is an open market where prices are negotiated before and after an animal is killed. Many Tonga who take their cattle to sell at Mwanamayinda depend on information received from their relatives employed or staying in the urban areas of Lusaka, Kafue and Mazabuka. Mwanamayinda could also be a metaphor, like Karen Tranberg Hansen's *Salaula*, for new forms of economic activities that scholars continue to study (Gordon 2003). Thus trading activities at Mwanamayinda reveal a long history among the Tonga because of a desire to maximize benefits, or inadequate support from government or ultra-exploitative relations with traders as middle agents. The author experienced three different forms of participation in that market regularly from the late 1970s to the late 1980s, and occasionally since the 1990s. First, Tonga cattle owners would ask their relatives to mobilize their friends to buy cattle. The seller and kinsman would fix a price that would not disturb the plans of the cattle's owner. Second, relatives were asked to sell cattle at the market. These relatives would know beef prices in urban areas, helping to minimize or avoid loss. Third, an auction style was used.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we return to the beginning of this discussion. One of the concluding remarks in Colson's 1948 paper was that 'the chief said: we want these bulls, but we don't want you to give them to us. We want to buy them. If you give them to us, soon you will say: "the government provided the bulls so all the cattle in the country belong to the Government". Then you will take all our cattle' (1948: 7). This demand for the people's ability to rely on their own resources in 1948 contrasts with that of the Zambian government in 1980, when a radical agricultural policy depended on the goodwill of foreign support. That support did not materialize and the initiative failed. The first lesson from studies of the Tonga is their strong voice for economic independence. The second lesson is that organic advocates and intellectuals have the lines of their work clearly defined by Tonga matrilineal corporate behaviour. From his research in Mazabuka and Monze, Smith argued that land tenure reform involving 'replacement of customary with statutory tenure is no longer seen as a magical bullet for rural development and increased agricultural productivity' (2004: 1641). Smith noted further that succession is increasingly moving from matrilineal to patrilineal patterns in Southern Zambia. He warned that customary tenure should not 'be heedlessly replaced by the state tenure on economic grounds' (2004: 1658). Third, it still has to be explained why successive territorial governments have let down the Tonga. Fourth, studies on Southern Zambia set an agenda for a national scholarly synthesis of how environment, socio-cultural and external interventions affected economic development. The Tonga remained strongly tied to their matrilineal values and practices despite formidable obstacles as social differentiation took place and the Tonga interacted with more powerful societal forces.

Using matrilineality as a framework to understand social change from the 1930s to the 1980s shows how difficult it has been to find lasting solutions to poverty and environmental disasters in Southern Zambia. The dispersed nature of matrilineal households and values of reciprocal obligations helped the Tonga to deal with localized and frequent droughts and other forms of natural disasters. Thus Tonga matrilineality was a social and environmental survival strategy. The Tonga adapted well to the introduction of technology, especially through Christian missionary groups. The majority of the Tonga rejected open economic discrimination and fraudulent forms of change, such as the colonial administration introduced through marketing and production in the 1930s. The Tonga were constantly aware of how deeply vulnerable they were. Yet matrilineal practices persevered: elderly women relied on matrilineal values and practices to secure support from their brothers, daughters and sons who had migrated to urban areas or had settled elsewhere in Southern Zambia. Cliggett (2005) further showed that many Tonga males used strategies to accumulate and control resources as security. Yet the Tonga continued to mix ties with *basimukowa* (matrilineal relatives) and *basyanausi* (father's lineage) to manage internal change and external interventions. What is remarkable is that the Tonga persisted in using these networks in the face of overwhelming challenges.

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CHAPTER XI

Agricultural Change and the Tonga

Tafadzwa Chevo¹

Introduction

In the present day, the soils of the Zambezi are sodic and of low fertility, alluvial soils are limited and heavy clay soils are widespread. In winter they dry out and become hard; ploughing the heavy soils with oxen would be easier but the presence of the tsetse fly makes it impossible to keep cattle in many parts of the region. Wild animals such as buffalo and elephant cause much damage to fields, sometimes destroying families' entire crops. Prior to the establishment of the Kariba Dam the Tonga had ways of circumventing these challenges.

This paper is a brief survey of Tonga agricultural practices in the Southern Province of Zambia from prior to the establishment of Kariba Dam through to the present day. It examines colonial legislation, implications of the dam's construction, and describes the immense challenges to their agricultural system in the post-construction years since the late 1950s.

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Pre-Construction Tonga Agriculture

Reynolds and Cousins (1993) (on the Zimbabwe side) and Scudder (1962) (on the Zambian side) describe Tonga agriculture in the region around the Zambezi River and its tributaries before the construction of Lake Kariba. The Zambezi came down in flood annually, leaving a layer of fertile soil on its banks. After the floodwaters receded, people made two kinds of fields or gardens near the river. *Jelele* were riverbank gardens that could be cultivated during the dry season after the peak flood in March and April had passed. The Tonga would interplant an early-maturing variety of maize, beans, cowpeas, cucumbers, melons and Turkish tobacco in fields along the riverbank. There were also *kuti* gardens made on the flat and fertile alluvial floodplains just above the riverbanks, which could be cropped twice a year. Maize, beans, cowpeas, cucurbit crops like pumpkins, melons and cucumbers, and small amounts of okra and sesame were planted during the rainy season. These crops were harvested towards the end of the rains and replanted again immediately after the cresting of the floodwaters. Both *jelele* and *kuti* gardens could be replanted year after year without resting periods and without crop yields falling.

Further back from the river sat *unda* gardens that were not permanently farmed. They were made on alluvial soils that hardly ever flooded or on sandier soils. These depended entirely on rainfall and so were planted for some years and then left to fallow and regain their fertility. In the 1940s the population along the river became so large that there wasn't enough land for everyone, so people began to develop a new type of field, *temwa*, much further inland. These were often separated from *unda* by areas of uncultivated bush; they were slash-and-burn fields that were fallowed once yields began to drop. By the 1950s the *temwa* had become the most important garden for some communities along the river.

The great variety of crops grown in the different types of gardens helped to reduce risk of famine – if one crop or garden type failed completely, it was likely that another would succeed. The main agricultural implements used by people were axes and short-handled hoes, mainly for clearing bush. Most households cultivated about one acre per family member. Livestock were also important in the farming system. Where the tsetse fly was absent cattle were kept, as well as goats, sheep, chickens and doves. A few people kept donkeys and pigs.

On the Zambian side of the river, the number of cattle in the Zambezi Valley increased from less than one thousand in 1914 to over twenty-one thousand by 1956. People brought ploughs, allowing more land to be cultivated. Apart from ploughing, cattle were valued for milk, as capital investment that could be easily converted into cash should the need arise, and as means whereby social obligations to relatives and others could be met. Goats and sheep were also sold to meet cash needs. Besides growing crops, people gathered wild plants, fished and hunted: activities especially important in drought years or when disasters like floods or pest outbreaks destroyed crops. Men also worked in jobs away from the Zambezi Valley, providing money not just for taxes, but also for buying cattle, hoes, blankets, clothing and even for purchasing food in years of poor harvests. Taken together, Tonga agriculture was a multifaceted system that required great skill and knowledge to manage. It was well adapted to the difficult conditions of the Zambezi Valley, and it spread the risk of failure because it was unlikely that all parts of the system would fail at the same time.

Pre-Construction Colonial Influence

The impact of the colonial state on Tonga agriculture before the building of the Kariba Dam was complex and is often

overlooked. Ncube (2004) notes that in the early colonial period the most significant change was characterized by the rapid expansion of the tsetse fly belt and sleeping sickness within the Zambezi Valley. This was mainly due to the African disarmament, hunting prohibitions and the promulgation of vegetation laws (*ibid.*). Africans armed with guns (acquired from Portuguese traders along the Zambezi River and from South Africa) had previously been able to control big game populations and eliminate the tsetse fly from large areas of north-western Zimbabwe (Selous 1908 cited in Ncube 2004). However white officials did not trust Africans with guns given that this would be a potential hazard to the weak and scattered colonial administration (Ncube 2004). Consequently colonial laws such as the Forestry and Herbage Preservation Ordinance and the Game Law Consolidation Ordinance of 1906 (prohibiting hunting) facilitated the spread of the bush and the rapid recovery of large game populations leading to conditions that allowed for the rapid expansion of the tsetse fly and sleeping sickness in the region.

This in turn effected population movement caused primarily by Government policy. This policy led to the forced removal of three thousand Tonga people in the 1910s from certain areas threatened with sleeping sickness or human trypanosomiasis, resulting in overpopulation and pressure on agricultural land along the Zambezi that considerably impoverished the originally rich alluvial and colluvial soils along the river (Ncube 2004). By 1942 all the land had been worked and could no longer support the inhabitants, thereby causing the Tonga to move out of the lower valley floor and resettle in the interior. As they moved inland, they occupied the valleys of the Zambezi's tributaries that still had fertile soils and water, and where they could continue to employ their agricultural techniques for exploiting alluvium (Department of Agriculture 1942).

Weakened by disease and recurrent famine between 1880 and 1950, gathering became the major survival technique of the region's people. The Tonga had the widest range of forest produce ever studied in Africa (Illiffe 1990), and were experts at elaborate techniques to remove the toxic ingredients of certain tubers (Scudder 1962). Because of their great facility at utilizing natural produce, it is said that David Livingstone was convinced starvation was impossible in the Zambezi Valley (*ibid.*). However, as Ncube (2004) notes, even a reliance on wild produce was sometimes insufficient to keep people from starving in the colonial period due to considerable population increase in the valley between 1900 and 1940.

Kariba Dam and Post-Construction Implications

Industrial expansion in the Federation of Rhodesians and Nyasaland created growing demand for electric power. The obvious choice for bulk energy at that time was hydroelectric power and it was decided to meet this demand with the construction of a big hydroelectric project at the Kariba Gorge on the Zambezi River, thus creating the world's largest artificial reservoir at the time, Lake Kariba (Magadza 2006).

The forced removal and resettlement in 1958 of approximately fifty-seven thousand members of the Gwembe Tonga tribe to a series of villages along the lake and below the dam has been well documented (Anderson 1956; Colson 1971; Scudder 1962). No attempts were made to educate the Tonga on the Lake Kariba Project or relocation process (Magadza 1995; 2006); rather, less than a year before the valley was to be flooded, they were simply told they would have to move from their homes. Other mid-project changes turned translocation of the Tonga into a hurried exercise of moving the population to areas with little or no infrastructure or civic amenities (*ibid.*).

As was noted by the World Commission on Dams in 2000 (Magadza 2006) communities that do not own land or other visible assets are often marginalized by such projects as the creation of Lake Kariba. Ownership in such cases is defined within a context that has limited understanding of traditional law ownership in a communal ownership setting. As a result, resettlement had profound social and economic effects on the Valley Tonga in both Northern and Southern Rhodesia. The shortage of large areas of cultivable land made it impossible for communities to be resettled together. To exploit the pockets of available arable land, some villages were resettled more than 80 km apart (Colson 1971). People lost the valued alluvial gardens that had played a major role in staving off famine. The drastic reduction in arable land changed the Tonga land-tenure system. Centuries-old property rights and claims to status were extinguished by the mere fact of removal.

The government policy of allocating each person roughly the same amount of land in the resettlement areas erased differences related to landholding. Diversity in size and quality of landholdings vanished, yet in the past some men and women had only small plots of the river land or the less-desirable bush land. Moreover women's rights to land were seriously compromised by the move because land was only allocated to men. These were clearly defined individual and communal property rights in Tonga society that were lost; even though displaced Tonga were allocated alternative land, it could not replace their ecological and cultural ties with the Gwembe, nor could it prevent them from becoming economically alienated through the disruption of their agricultural livelihoods.

Ecologically the Tonga had adapted to floodplain and rain-fed agriculture combined with a hunter-gatherer mode of subsistence in times of drought. They had evolved an agricultural strategy that gave them a number of options for

coping with their food needs in the valley. The situation was fundamentally different in the resettlement areas where wildlife-management authorities in each territory strictly controlled hunting, there were few occurrences of the herbaceous vegetation they knew, such as *senkenene*, and the presence of the tsetse fly made it impossible for them to rear livestock, further limiting the extent to which the heavier clay soils could be cultivated (Magadza 2006).

Furthermore, as reported by Magadza (2006), it was no longer possible to use the fertile floodplain during the dry season for a second crop over the year. In the Zambezi Valley the Tonga had been accustomed to a system of fixed agriculture using both seasonal rains and the flood patterns of the Zambezi River to cultivate permanent alluvial fields whose soils required no fallowing, rotation or application of manure to maintain fertility. After resettlement the Tonga were faced with a reorganization of their methods of land usage. The majority of people were allocated land in the hills that was viable with shifting cultivation only; but because of insufficient land and too many people now dependent upon it to permit shifting cultivation, a conservative type of agriculture based on rotation and the use of fertilizer needed to be introduced instead. The newcomers were reduced to one option: namely hand-tilling semi-arid *mopane* woodlands in an area of highly erratic rainfall for only one harvest a year, with a high risk of crop failure. There were indications of widespread famine in the early days of the Tonga resettlement efforts; as a result the Tonga subsequently became a food-deficit people.

Changing Agricultural Livelihoods

In response to resettlement the Tonga developed a different farming system. In much of the Zambezi Valley the Tonga

operated a dry-land farming system without cattle. Reynolds' (1991) analysis of twelve families' holdings of thirty-five fields in Mola found that the average size of each family farm was 3.43 ha and the average size of each field was 1.18 ha. Even though there were no cattle, most households kept goats, and these fed off the plentiful grass, trees and bushes. They bred well and herds grew quickly. Almost every household kept chickens, which provided useful amounts of protein in the diet at minimal cost, though frequent death from heat, lice, lack of water and predators made them an unreliable food source.

The most important crops were grains that provided the staple foods: sorghum, bulrush millet and maize. Pumpkins, okra, melons, gourds, cowpeas and cucumbers were planted amongst the grain. Sometimes these interplanted crops succeeded even when the main crop failed. In 1987 one farmer in Mola harvested over fifty watermelons from his maize field even though no grain was harvested (Reynolds and Cousins 1993). Groundnuts and cowpeas were other important sources of energy and protein. They were planted in more fertile soils, but likely to fail in dry years. Seed was difficult to come by and often had to be bought outside the Zambezi Valley. Other foods grown in smaller quantities were sweet potatoes, sesame, and vegetables like rape, cabbages and tomatoes. Vegetable gardens were planted next to streams and were mostly very small in size. Banana trees were also grown near streams.

Cotton became the main cash crop, though in Reynolds' study of Mola (1991), she found that few farmers there could afford to buy the fertilizer, seed, pesticides or spraying equipment needed to grow it. Transport was a major problem: Karoi, 237 km away, was the nearest town where inputs could be bought and the cotton sold after harvesting. Hiring transport to travel such long distances was very expensive, though when rainfall was sufficient, yields of up to four bales an acre could

be achieved. Red Swazi sorghum for brewing beer was another cash crop that the Tonga grew (Reynolds and Cousins 1993).

The major problem the Tonga faced was the shortage of fertile soils. They attempted to replace fertility by the traditional practice of resting the land under natural bush for a number of years but since the population had grown, fertile land has been used up and the length of the fallow periods continued to decrease every year. Some households began cultivating their fields on a permanent basis. Without some way of replacing fertility the land eventually became exhausted and stopped yielding food crops (Reynolds 1991).

The drastic alteration of Tonga agriculture created dependencies on modern means of agriculture through the introduction of high-yield varieties as well as cash crops. Magadza (1995) examined food production and consumption patterns in Omay communal resettlement areas and determined that food consumption was below recommended nutritional levels. He noted that attempts by agricultural experts to improve food security by introducing high-yield maize varieties instead rendered communities more vulnerable to droughts, since they shifted from mixed cropping of drought-resistant crops to the new maize cultivars. Fertilizers were expensive and farmers had to take a big risk spending their money when poor rains may have led to crop failure in any case (Reynolds and Cousins 1993).

Another problem was the constant drain on labour to protect crops. Women and children expended much time and energy chasing off masses of birds to protect ripening sorghum and millet crops. Buffalo and elephants were also hazards. People built shelters on stilts called *busanza* and lived in them during the growing season. They tied ropes hung with tins between trees surrounding their fields, which they shook to frighten off animals. These methods were not very effective

and sometimes harvests were completely destroyed. As children increasingly attended school, women's workload increased.

A recent phenomenon described by Cliggett and colleagues (Unruh et al. 2005), which will increasingly affect Tonga agriculture, is the considerable deforestation taking place as a result of farmers attempting to secure new tenure rights – or in other words 'clearing to claim'. Migrants are moving to areas where land is significantly abundant and quickly clearing forested land provided to them by a local headman for fear that it will be repossessed if left uncultivated. Migrants clearly view land rights given by local leadership as fragile; stripping the forest provides additional physical evidence solidifying their claim in the face of what is perceived to be capricious leadership.

Indeed, in areas where land is no longer abundant, new migrants frequently approach local leadership and argue that patches of apparently unused forest land should be taken from the current holder and allocated instead to them. Land pressures build as youth come of age and need land to start their own families and farming activities. Forested portions of land allocations are vulnerable to allegations of non-use, even if the landholder is holding such areas in reserve for future use by their children, for the gathering of forest products, for grazing, for collection of fuel wood or other household uses (Cliggett 2005). Thus, the land is further stressed as deforestation is perpetuated.

Conclusion

Prior to the construction of the Kariba Dam, not only was there limited knowledge of the area's animal and plant ecology but also little knowledge of the Tonga population living in the

Gwembe Valley. The 'downstream' impacts of the project, in both ecological and human terms, were little considered. The Tonga had a riverine livelihood and culture; their resettlement resulted in physical, agricultural, economic and cultural displacement. These losses, not measurable in material terms, have caused long-lasting trauma in the Tonga community. It must also be appreciated that, although the land they occupy may be state land, the tenure and ownership perceptions of the concerned community might be at variance with those of the state and, in fact, predate the existence of the state itself.

As Reynolds (1991) rightly points out, Tonga agriculture has never been either simple or unchanging. Tonga farmers have faced huge challenges and will continue to make difficult choices in the years to come. Researchers and extension workers alike try to arm farmers with sound advice, but their own knowledge is far from complete. Achieving true food security will never be possible without working closely with Tonga farmers to learn the indigenous or local specializations and knowledge relevant to their local farming communities.

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CHAPTER XII

*Syaacivwule Mwangu*¹: NGOs and People Empowerment in the Gwembe Valley

Lawrence Maumbi Michelo²

Introduction

Development³ discourse speaks to how the state in African countries has not met challenges to transform and improve the livelihoods of its citizens. Disappointment with state-led development and its lack of 'good governance' prompted the international donor community – specifically the World Bank and International Monetary Fund – to seek alternative means of overcoming government limitations.

Non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, emerged as the key actors receiving funds from the international community for development interventions and they assumed responsibilities that were previously the domain of government. NGOs argued that they were more rooted in communities and

1. A Tonga proverb depicting a greedy, selfish person who thinks of his own stomach (his needs) at the cost of other people. This epitomizes someone who lacks *bunyina* or *ubuntu*, which is an African philosophy of compassion, solidarity and brotherliness.
2. Lawrence Michelo (deceased) was Lecturer of International Relations and Development at Mulungushi University, Kabwe, Zambia.
3. This paper will not go into detail to discuss the wider definitions, concepts and debates that surround the notion of development.

that their programmes were a truer reflection of what people desired. Funds were given directly to these organizations, sidestepping the state in the hope that resources would reach and benefit communities: poor people would 'own' development.

Three decades later, this is far from the reality. Rural transformation has not been achieved, despite massive NGO funding. Using the case study of a World Vision project in the Gwembe district, Zambia, this article examines local perceptions of whether NGOs have lived up to the expectations of the governance debate and delivered on their development promises of the 1990s. How did World Vision implement its projects to ensure community participation, accountability and ownership of the interventions? What role did communities play in day-to-day implementations? If NGOs are still assisting Gwembe communities after three decades' worth of projects, can it be said that they have succeeded in bringing development?

Study Methods

The material presented in this article comes from a study conducted between 1 October and 14 December 2006. During the two and half months spent in the Luumbo area of the Gwembe Valley (Zambia), the history and current activities of the World Vision International Zambia programmes were discussed with local residents. Fieldwork during these months was funded via self-financing from the author's resident university at Cape Town to Lusaka, Zambia, and eventually to the Gwembe Valley.

The benefits of a qualitative research methodology lie in that it 'can be used to answer questions about the complex nature of the phenomenon, often with purpose of describing and understanding the phenomenon from the participants' point of view' Leedy and Ormrod (2001: 100). This study used

the interpretative method in data collection and analysis. This method allows the researcher to benefit from hindsight where the study is done in a situation where one 'enters the setting with an open mind, prepared to immerse themselves in the complexity of the situation, and interacts with their participants' (Leedy and Ormrod 2001: 102).

The study used both primary- and secondary-data-collection techniques. For primary data, semi-structured interviews, focus-group discussions, and field direct observations were used as instruments and methods for collecting data. Interviews were conducted on a face-to-face basis at national level, mainly with World Vision project staff. The following were interviewed at district level in Gwembe; the Ministry of Agriculture (three participants); Ministry of Health (one participant), Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare (one participant); District Administrators Office (one participant); and the Ministry of Education (one participant). Interviews were conducted at district level and aimed to gain further insights into other aspects of World Vision International Zambia. Government officials and other relevant partners in development were interviewed. At the community level, project beneficiaries, non-beneficiaries and community leaders (village headmen, ward councillors, church leaders, teachers and health workers, including ordinary community members) were interviewed. Five of the ten community projects were interviewed. Focus groups' member composition was about 50 per cent male and 50 per cent female, and the group numbers ranged from nine to fourteen. Sessions took no more than two hours of discussions and exchange.

The researcher took notes during the interviews and recorded the discussions on tape. The recorded interviews were transcribed, typed and read several times to ensure a correct understanding of their meaning. Interviews were conducted in the local language, of which the researcher is a

native speaker. Analysis of the data was done to extract patterns, themes and deep-seated meanings in the responses of the interviewees.

The interviews were complemented by a desktop review of studies, evaluations and project documents of World Vision International Zambia (WVZ 1997, 2004, 2005). The framework of the discussion and analysis has been within the theoretical discourses on good governance, development theory in the context of rural development, and people empowerment.

Within the scope of this research, World Vision International in the Gwembe district, Zambia was selected as the NGO of focus.⁴ Though issues of governance and accountability are sensitive to NGOs, it was possible to obtain project documents, evaluation reports and partnership agreements from World Vision International Zambia. The NGO also provided three weeks of office space, time, and the opportunity to interview their staff and visit five out of ten project sites in the Gwembe district. The NGO prearranged the meetings with the five communities. As a result, the communities had prior knowledge of the interview questions and were prone to answer in a particular way. This limited the resulting analysis in that a lot of time had to be spent to get the interviewees to open up and discuss freely what they actually thought of World Vision projects.

Despite confidentiality clauses between World Vision and the Luumbo Area Development Project committee, it was possible to have frank and open discussions with the leaders, project beneficiaries and traditional leaders in Gwembe. The district government officials in Gwembe were also open in their responses despite their association with the NGO staff.

4. This was a single case study comparative-method approach. The study could have sampled any NGO in Zambia or, indeed, Africa. The results and sentiments echoed illustrate the governance crisis in which the NGOs find themselves in their quest to empower the communities.

Good Governance: Placing NGOs Above the State as Agents of Rural Transformation?

The good governance paradigm became popular in the 1990s, arising from the failure of the modernization and dependency theories so prevalent in the 1960s and 1970s. Governance, as distinct from government, meant more than just management of political affairs; it also included the overall running of the economy. Defined from this broader perspective, the term came to have a distinct meaning and application in African development discourse and practice.

In the 1990s, the political and economic chaos of African countries was identified as a crisis of governance. At the forefront of promoting reform in Africa were international development agencies and practitioners who found themselves dealing again with issues of government performance (Hyden and Bratton 1992), much as they had in early post-independent Africa. In the 1960s, African leaders turned to multilateral and bilateral partners for help in setting up government agencies and training public servants as a way of enhancing the management of public policy. Once African governments attained high levels of competency, Western aid ceased.

By the 1980s, the discussion of government performance resurfaced under the leadership of the World Bank, which was concerned by the continued regression of African economic and political indicators. Reviews concluded that bad governance was at the heart of the crisis, manifested by the politics of patronage, clientelism and a quest for power by the African elite. While in the 1960s the term 'capacity building' was used to describe development assistance, good governance in the 1980s required not only strengthening the capacity of state bureaucracy, it also called for fundamental changes to the political and economic organization of African societies. Thus state political and economic structural changes were

implemented in the spirit of enhancing good governance practices.

The World Bank's call for improved governance in Africa got support from a wide range of people interested in fighting poverty, particularly private development agencies. Governance came to mean a system of managing public affairs through broad-based participation empowering disadvantaged groups, with an emphasis on fairness and accountability (Hyden and Bratton 1992). The international community looked to structures outside state bureaucracy, especially NGOs, to guarantee civic participation in development. Good governance was a resounding call championing NGOs as models of participation, accountability, and transparency.

In this study NGOs refers to private, non-profit organizations involved in development work, distinct from both the public and private spheres (McGann and Johnstone 2005). Size, history, geopolitical location, and type of intervention are other factors that can define NGOs. They receive support from internal and external agencies to implement development programmes. They identify as independent of the state and yet work for the public good.

Development literature from the 1980s and 1990s is a celebration of NGOs as the best alternative to the failure of state-directed growth initiatives. NGOs were lauded because they were seen as 'having knowledge of local conditions and being responsive to local needs' (Uphoff 1993: 619) – in other words, able to do what government had failed to. The World Bank (1995: 15) listed the strengths of NGOs as 'strong grassroots links, field-based expertise, [the] ability to innovate and adopt a process of long-term commitment, and emphasis on sustainability and cost effectiveness'. However NGOs' virtues also provided their limitations. The following case study from Gwembe Valley, Zambia highlights the negative tendencies inherent in NGOs by

critiquing the premises driving their predominance in development efforts.

Views from Gwembe Valley

The Question of Participation

Because progressive NGOs such as World Vision International received funding on the belief that their management and decision-making structures would identify with the poor, World Vision International Zambia (WVZ) worked to consult communities from the start of their projects. From 1981, when WVZ first came to Gwembe, to the present date we have witnessed project staff move into the Luumbo area of Gwembe and ask people what problems they face in the community. Based upon these responses, the NGO wrote a programme of action and started implementation activities. For instance between 1984 and 1997 WVZ implemented a Community Development Programme. They later changed their approach to an Area Development Programme (1998 to the present date). Prior to these programmes, WVZ implemented an emergency programme from 1981 to 1984.

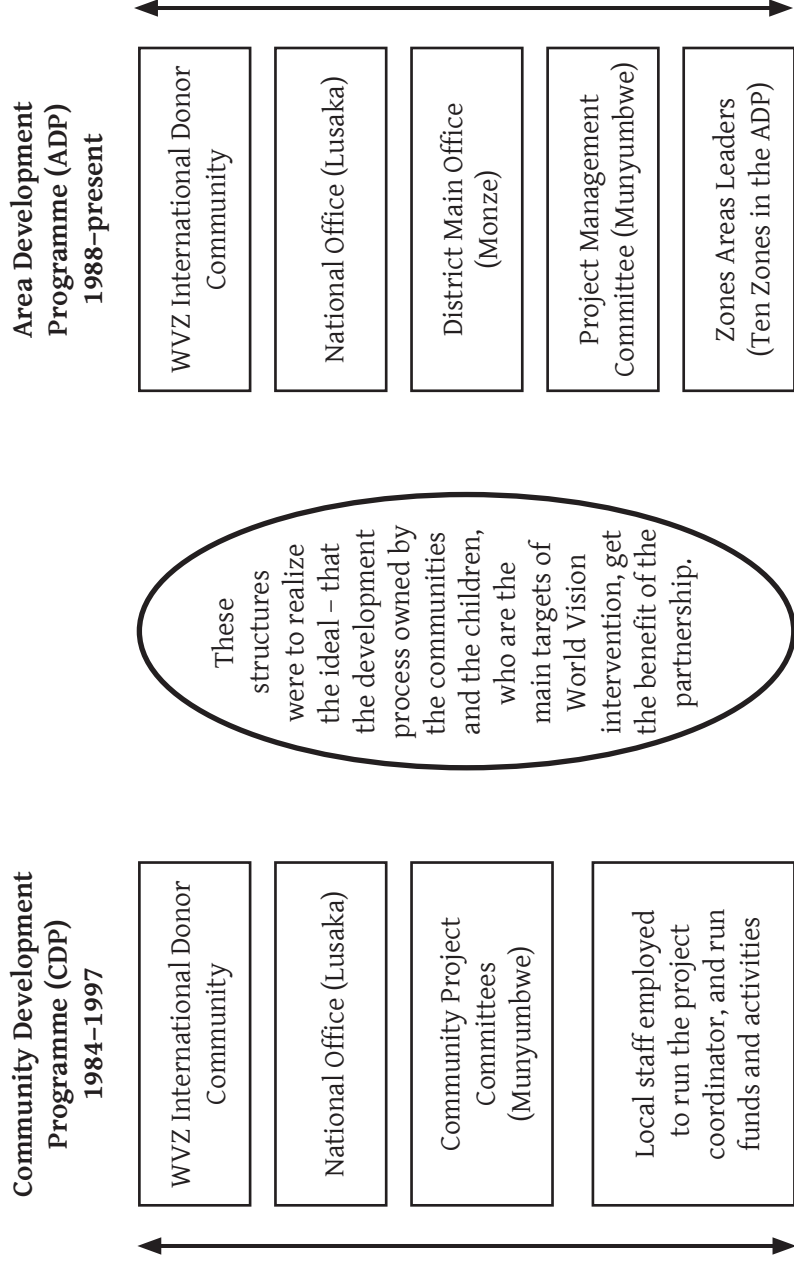
The relief programme intervention ran from 1981 to 1985. In 1985 WVZ received special funding for rural community development projects. Thus from 1985 to 1988 the NGO implemented Community Development Programmes (CDPs). These ended with the phasing out of the funding in 1988. However the CDPs were continued, though under different funding. The new funding source was called the 'sponsorship project'. Under the sponsorship project, community development became secondary to child support. The child sponsorship project ended in 1997. This gave birth to the new programme known as the Area Development

Programme (ADP), which focused on wider and bigger areas, as opposed to the smaller community-development projects of 1985 to 1997. During all the years of its work in Zambia and the Gwembe district, the focus of WVZ has been to reach out to vulnerable households, with special emphasis on children.

Modes of implementation and participation in day-to-day decision-making can be said to be the true determinant of whether local people own the development process in their communities. From 1981, when WVZ started its projects in Gwembe, the reality of Gwembe development is that WVZ have yet to put structures in place that make the community equal partners in development. The realization of such community-based institutions results in less power for the NGO, as the case of the change from CDPs (Community Development Programmes) to ADPs (Area Development Programmes) demonstrates. Power is direct access to resources or money, and control over programmes, information and jobs. Under CDPs the community had these powers. When WVZ changed the structure to a centralized system, the ADP framework (under the guise of accountability and capacity building), the community perceived this as the removal of all decisions and accounts to Monze, away from them – a reversal of community empowerment. Related to this is the assumption that NGOs reach people even in remote areas where state bureaucracy is weak, not felt or absent; in Gwembe, study participants challenged this assumption by describing the habit of WVZ only working in areas that were easily accessible.

The actual operations of WVZ in Gwembe after the switch from CDPs to ADPs contest the assumptions that NGOs are locally embedded, flexible, low cost and sincere instruments for reaching the poor. In the eyes of the Luumbo people, the very structure of WVZ does not allow participation in decision-making, as now communities have no say in the design of the development process. People question the top-down imposition

Figure 7: World Vision Development Structure (Past and Present)



as contrary to a model of NGOs as 'rooted in the people and therefore represent[ing] the people's interest' (World Bank 1995: 51).

Even with a parallel structure of community representatives alongside paid WVZ staff, the perception in Luumbo is that local people were only incorporated to make the projects appear people-owned. NGO staff hold the power, not the representatives elected by the community. For example, WVZ is well known for a popular child-sponsorship programme in which (typically) Western sponsors pay money monthly to support a local child in poverty and exchange letters with the child; however, Gwembe parents and community members are not allowed to know the name and address of the sponsor or even write letters back to them – only paid WVZ staff do this and often without asking or consulting either the children or parents. When a sponsored child is sick, it is a WVZ employee who accompanies the parent to the hospital and is in charge of all monies that WVZ pays for treatment. Such structures serve the interests of the NGO and not the community. They are designed to control information and keep the community in check so that it cannot send negative information to the donors that may tarnish the image of WVZ.

The Question of Responsiveness

Related to the notion of structure, responsiveness and feedback provide a participatory voice by which ordinary people are involved in decision-making and the day-to-day operations of the project. Projects are to regularly review whether they are still in line with community needs and aspirations from the point of implementation. Lack of a system allowing for feedback on programme cycles is said to be a principle reason for the failure of state development efforts in post-independence Africa. Hyden and Bratton confirm that '[state] development

became a top-down affair ... confined to a small clique ... who personalized power' (1992: 25). Communities had no mechanism to air their views at every stage of a project.

With state bureaucracy failing to guarantee participation, NGOs became an avenue by which voices of the poor became part of the development process. However in Luumbo WVZ structures render project responsiveness unachievable and people have no say at all in day-to-day decision-making. The reason for this, argues the community, is the centralization of the operations in Monze. According to the NGO, this helps meet the stringent need for donor reports which communities cannot manage and execute themselves. That the community needs to be prepared first for project ownership through capacity building has reduced interactions between WVZ and the community to that of teacher and student. People are no longer able to possess authority and power over the development process.

The quest for expansion in light of available donor funding has worked against WVZ's rural development. Their change of programming from CDPs to the territorially large ADPs demonstrates that community participation can be limited in very large NGO projects. Decision-making becomes complex and the probability of the NGO elite accruing benefits increases. While this could be avoided if NGOs remain quite small, small projects benefit only a few, which in turn affects funding. In the case of Luumbo WVZ decided to expand in the face of increased funding and a desire to reach more people; unfortunately, this has led to a highly centralized, elite-driven process, disempowering communities and hampering responsiveness.

The Question of Ownership

To the people of Luumbo, ownership of the ventures means having total control and say in project management, especially

of the activities and resources, and so the perception was unanimous that they did not own the WVZ projects. Communities made a distinction between the original WVZ – referring to the CDP structure of 1984–1997 – and the new ADP approach. Centralization of power in ADPs transferred total ownership of the project from the Gwembe community to the NGO elite in Monze because that is where programmes were managed from.

This geographical relocation from Gwembe to Monze made community members feel disempowered even though WVZ still maintains staff in Gwembe, and at community or zone levels. Respondents recognized zone leaders and area-management committees as part of the structure put in place to facilitate consultation and participation in programme management, but there were contestations as to whose interests they represented. The local leadership election process was not clear to people. It was agreed that village committees had no say in WVZ programmes and that the real power lay with people in Monze and Lusaka. Those individuals were just *mbasikulya mali aabo bakasalwa abukomonze* (people who eat money with the people in Monze) – representing their own welfare, not that of the people.

There was also confusion about elected village committee members who were not salaried and the community facilitators paid by the NGO to work on child-sponsorship programmes. The focus group was unanimous in stating that these people were corrupt and served only their own interests, like other staff at national and local levels, even though they were local residents. The perception was that being employed by WVZ changed their thinking and loyalties; some said it even caused them to view regular community members with suspicion. Members of the NGO elite from Monze and Lusaka controlled local staff's manner of speech and thinking and they forgot the village language and interests.

How projects ended was a further example of community lack of ownership. In the change from CDPs to ADPs, in particular, they had played no part; thus some CDPs ended without community knowledge, even though the community desired continuation. Finally, it was interesting to note that development interventions were always referred to as 'World Vision projects' by focus-group respondents, rather than 'our projects'.

The Question of Trust and Accountability

One frequently cited assumption is that NGOs' strength is in their efficiency and accountability, but the experience of WVZ in Gwembe challenges that. Governments are accountable to voters and private companies are answerable to shareholders and the market; as for NGOs, though the donor community can demand accountability, it is not clear the extent to which the NGOs are accountable to the ordinary people whom they work to serve. In terms of public management, their chains of commands are well established.

One big point of contention is that WVZ employed technical staff based on the argument that donor-reporting requirements necessitated them, as well as the creation of a centralized development structure in Monze, explaining that the funds they received from external donors were so large that local communities lacked the ability to account for them. However this typical NGO approach only works to contribute to 'brain drain from civil servants, ambitious public-sector managers attracted by higher salaries and more flexible working conditions' (Van de Walle et al. 2003: 20). More tellingly, local communities do not receive copies of reports and are not sure how money is spent. The focus group made it clear that communities view the whole NGO structure as corrupt and

unjust, benefiting WVZ at the expense of Gwembe people. Distrust of the sponsorship programme is particularly high: community perception is that WVZ is fundraising on their children's behalf, but very little of this money reaches the community. The bulk of it ends up covering administrative and operational costs while the community receives nothing substantial.

This is a typical example of how donor priorities override those of the beneficiaries. WVZ's employment of highly technical staff shows how easily 'accountability shifts upwards, rather than where it ought to be, down below with the grassroots' (Zaidi 1999: 266). It is clear that levels of trust and accountability are very low in the Luumbo area, despite the many years that WVZ has worked there. The community felt the NGO was not answerable for the resources and activities of the project and that they had no means of checking for accountability.

Views of WVZ Development Workers

Development practitioners at the field level in Luumbo also participated in focus groups for this study. All workers interviewed agreed that the shift from CDPs to ADPs had disempowered communities. In the earlier approach, communities had more control and power over resources. However, contrary to the community's assertion that there was much progress under CDPs, the NGOs' strong rationale for the shift was that there had been little or no development occurring.

Field officers noted that in CDPs, communities were in the habit of hiring untrained personnel who compromised the quality of the projects. After the change to the ADPs, WVZ employed highly trained staff capable of producing excellent work for rural projects. These technocrats could manage vast

resources, especially as the pool of resources increased and diversified to include government grants, donations and large donor funds. From the NGO's perspective, local communities were not sufficiently ready to manage the development process given the large amounts of funding involved.

All the development staff agreed that Gwembe communities at present do not have total control over the projects and that this is unavoidable in the face of stringent donor requirements necessitating highly qualified technical staff. Efficiency and resource accountability to the donors has been achieved, but at the cost of community empowerment. They no longer control things they used to control. Indeed sometimes donor-reporting demands become so overwhelming that instead of building the community's capacity, the development facilitator becomes the implementer in order to ensure the project lines up with donor specifications.

Conclusion

As this case study shows, the celebrated strengths of NGOs as community focused, participatory, democratic, community oriented, cost effective and better at reaching the poorest may be more a myth than a reality. WVZ has not translated the ideas of people-owned development into real practices of participation, accountability and transparency in their rural interventions. It appears that they may be more focused on sustaining financing of their offices through donor support, rather than seeking donor support for ground-level development efforts. As the discussion from respondents in this study suggests, local perceptions of these kinds of NGOs are not favourable.

The people of Gwembe have been disempowered by the WVZ elite who make programming decisions without

considering community concerns. They appear to be implementing programmes under the assumption that communities are not capable of owning the development process.

For Africa to progress in the twenty-first century, development models predicated on a reformed state and people-driven structures at the community level is necessary. A model that vilifies and bypasses the state is a sure way to fail. Unfortunately current NGOs' attempts at development are only breeding more poverty.

Good governance literature contributed to the rise of NGOs in African rural development and exposed the people of Gwembe Valley to a force they thought would bring hope and change to their lives. However the responses drawn from the community and development workers in the Gwembe Valley resonate with the frustration and loss of hope that has come after so many broken promises by NGOs in the 1990s.

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A multitude of scholars have visited Tonga communities. They have come from different countries, worked at different times, had different disciplinary interests and theoretical agenda and published in different places. Many of these scholars have been the products of Zambian and Zimbabwean universities. The research presented in this volume gives some idea of the rich knowledge now available on the Tonga – a people remarkable for their egalitarian ethos, practice of participatory democracy and willingness to experiment with new possibilities.

- Elizabeth Colson

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